

Afghan rebel assembly put off

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan-based Afghan guerrillas Sunday delayed a meeting to set up an interim government to give themselves time to resolve their differences with rebels based in Iran, rebel sources said. The sources said the main Pakistan-based guerrilla alliance had decided to convene a consultative council or "Shura" Feb. 10 which would approve an interim government after the withdrawal of Soviet troops, scheduled for Feb. 15. The council had originally been scheduled to meet Feb. 1 but four Iran-based guerrilla leaders Saturday rejected the interim government plan as hasty. The Iran-based rebels called for a united front to fight until the fall of the Soviet-backed government of President Najibullah in Kabul and the formation of an Islamic Council after the Soviet withdrawal. A spokesman for the Pakistan-based Mujahideen alliance said it had decided to send a delegation to Tehran to convince the Iran-based guerrillas to take part in the consultative council.

Jordan Times

An independent political daily published by the Jordanian Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يوبلسيستية بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية الراي.

Velayati arrives in Syria

DAMASCUS (R) — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati arrived in Damascus Sunday for talks on ending fighting in Lebanon between rival militias. Velayati told Reuters he was carrying a message for Syrian President Hafez Al Assad from his Iranian counterpart Ali Khamenei. He said he would discuss the militia wars with Lebanese leaders and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Sharaa. "I will exchange views with Syrian officials on a joint Syrian-Iranian effort aimed at putting an end to the disputes between our Lebanese brothers," Velayati said. More than 140 people have been killed since battles broke out on Jan. 1 between Hizbollah (Party of God) and Amal. The fighting in Beirut and southern Lebanon was sparked by a struggle for control of Lebanon's 1.5 million Shi'ites. Diplomats in the Syrian capital said Velayati was expected to meet Amal leader Nabih Berri.

Qasem: No solution without withdrawal, Palestinian state

AMMAN (Agencies) — Israel should give up the Arab territories it occupied in 1967 and allow the Palestinians to set up their own state, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Marwan Qasem said in remarks published Sunday.

"What Israel is suggesting now has nothing to do with the solution needed to settle the Palestinian cause," Qasem told the Arabic-language daily Al Dustour. "Israel has to withdraw from territories it occupied in 1967 and then allow Palestinians to establish their independent state in the West Bank and Gaza," he said.

If Israel followed such a course, "the era of peace in this region will start," Qasem was quoted as saying.

He said the Palestinians themselves should "decide what they want for their own benefit."

Qasem said an Israeli suggestion for a three-way confederation between Israel, Jordan and Palestine "has no relation to the required settlement of the Palestinian cause."

"The basic thing is to face facts, which call for Israel to open international will," Qasem said. Qasem said that if His Majesty King Hussein visits the United States soon, it would be "to emphasise to the new U.S. administration the necessity of the Arab moves and to press for the convening of an international peace conference."

He said the King would soon visit Saudi Arabia for talks with King Fahd as part of his efforts "to cleanse the Arab atmosphere and achieve Arab solidarity."

Qasem said he saw some positive signs for holding the next Arab summit. Qasem said the major events of the year 1988 were the Palestinian uprising and Jordan's historic decision last July to sever legal and administrative relations with the occupied West Bank.

Qasem said the uprising was the most important event since the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories. "The uprising has alerted the international community as a whole that the situation was not static as some parties used to describe it in the world media," Qasem said.

"The uprising has served as a reminder to the world to intensify efforts for finding a just, comprehensive and durable peace in the Middle East region."

Jordan's decision to sever legal and administrative relations with the West Bank, Qasem said, contributed to focusing world attention on the Palestine question. It also contributed to preserving and highlighting the Palestinian national identity, and made it clear to all parties involved in the peace process in the Middle East that they should talk directly to the Palestinians, he said.

Resolutions adopted by the Palestine National Council (PNC) in Algiers in November 1988 paved the way for removing any misconceptions that the Arabs do not wish to establish a just and comprehensive peace in the region, Qasem said.

The acceptance by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 clearly reflects the sincerity of Arab efforts to a just and comprehensive settlement," he said. He called on "those who used to urge the concerned parties to hold peace talks," to use their influence on Israel, which is the only party that rejects the idea of an international peace conference.

On prospects for holding an international peace conference, Qasem said that the next few weeks would witness intensified consultations among the countries concerned.

On the economic situation in Jordan, Qasem said Jordan, like all other countries in the region, is affected by difficult economic conditions. He pointed out that Jordan had



Marwan Al Qasem

LAST-MINUTE NEWS

U.N. envoy expected in Tehran

NICOSIA (R) — U.N. mediator Jan Eliasson will arrive in Iran Monday in an attempt to break a deadlock in peace talks with Iraq, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported Sunday.

S. Arabia agrees to Amin's return

RIYADH (AP) — Saudi Arabia has agreed to the return of exiled Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in response to requests by African leaders, an authoritative Saudi source said Sunday. The source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, declined to say whether Amin had returned, or whether a date had been fixed for that.

4 Red Cross workers return to Beirut

BEIRUT (R) — Four workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) returned to Beirut Sunday after leaving last month because of death threats. An airport source told Reuters that Francois Derron, Michel Raymond Berger and Angelo Bruenedinger arrived from Geneva at Beirut airport while mission chief Michel Dufour came by road from Damascus.

'Arafat offers to help free hostages'

LONDON (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat has offered his help to secure the release of British hostages in Lebanon, Western diplomats said Sunday. They said Arafat raised the matter at a Tunis meeting earlier this month with Foreign Minister William Waldegrave.

Lahd returns to South Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — The head of an Israeli-backed Lebanese militia returned to Lebanon Sunday after two months recovering in Israel from wounds suffered in an attempted assassination. An Israeli helicopter carried Lahd, 61-year-old head of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia, from Rambam hospital in Haifa to the border with Lebanon amid tight security, SLA-run Voice of Hope Radio said.

Dumas attends Israeli ceremony

TEL AVIV (R) — In a ceremony at a memorial, Israel Sunday honoured visiting French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas' father, who was executed by the Nazis for saving victims during World War II. Tears welled in Dumas' eyes as Israeli supreme court justice Moshe Beitski recalled how Georges Dumas paid with his life in 1943 for helping rescue members of the community in the south-western French town of Limoges. Dumas, a civil servant and resistance leader, tipped off people to save them from impending arrest, hid some in his house and supplied them with false identity papers to assist their escape.



Prime Minister Zaid Rifai and his North Yemeni counterpart Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani Sunday sign minutes of the meetings of the Joint Jordanian-North Yemeni Higher Committee (Petra photo)

Israeli cabinet blesses new anti-uprising army moves

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM

(Agencies) — The Israeli government endorsed new military measures against Palestinian protesters Sunday as a general strike closed most of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The crackdown has caused record casualties with at least 18 Palestinians being killed in the past 10 days and 52 admitted to hospital with gunshot wounds Thursday and Friday alone.

"The prime minister expressed on behalf of the whole government support for the policy of the army in the areas," cabinet secretary Eliakim Rubinstein told reporters after the weekly Israeli government meeting.

"This is a policy which is endorsed by the government, which is under instructions from the government and which is in the framework of the law," he said.

Parliamentarian Amnon Rubinstein of the centrist Shinui opposition party urged soldiers to disobey new army orders to fire plastic bullets at Palestinians who hurl stones, burn tyres or set up roadblocks.

"Killing as a punishment, or as deterrence, is illegal, and therefore the new instructions are patently illegal and according to the law should not be obeyed," the Jerusalem Post quoted him as saying.

Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev of the Labour Party said it was an "illegal act for a member of parliament to encourage soldiers not to obey orders."

The United States, Israel's closest ally, last week criticised Israel for giving its soldiers more leeway and said lethal force should not be used when their lives were not endangered.

At the Israeli cabinet meeting Sunday, Energy Minister Moshe Shahal of Rabin's Labour said the freer plastic bullets usage was "a possibly illegal order," Israel Radio said.

"I think the issue is worth checking," Shahal told the radio before the cabinet meeting started. In the occupied Gaza Strip, troops shot and wounded two Palestinians in the Mughazi re-

fugee camp during a general strike called in solidarity with Palestinians expelled by the Israeli occupation authorities during the 13-month-old uprising.

Troops shot and wounded another Palestinian during a search-and-arrest operation in Salfit village in the West Bank, Arab sources said.

Palestinians in Gaza City hurled two petrol bombs at a bus carrying labourers to Israel, the army said. The bus was gutted but no one was injured.

Saturday's casualties included a man who was reported to be guarding the Israel-appointed mayor of the village of Yatta and was accidentally shot by a death squad soldier during a stoning incident.

A 14-year-old boy also was killed Saturday and four others were wounded in confrontations with Israeli troops in the occupied territories, officials said. The dead teenager was Ali Ibrahim Shariefah Kanaan, who was killed in the West Bank's Tulkarem refugee camp, according to reports.

Arafat rejects Rabin plan

BAGHDAD (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat Sunday rejected as worthless an Israeli proposal for limited "self-rule" for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and elections to choose peace negotiators.

"It isn't worth the trouble to reply to these proposals which have been rejected even by Palestinian children," Arafat told a group of reporters Sunday.

"It is a new attempt to get out of the bottleneck in which Israel has found itself," he said, adding that the plan was doomed to fail.

The PLO leader was in Baghdad for a meeting of Palestinian leaders involved with the 13-month-old uprising in the occupied territories.

A new peace plan put forward last week by Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin calls for a period of limited "self-rule" for Palestinians in the occupied territories, to be followed by a three-way confederation between Israel, Jordan and Palestine.

Rabin said that if the Palestinians halted the uprising, they could have free elections to choose peace negotiators.

Earlier, Arafat issued a statement calling on Arab leaders to rally in support of the uprising. He declared it would continue "until our people establish their own independent state with Jerusalem as its capital," according to the statement issued in Nicosia, Cyprus, by the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

He asked the Arab leaders to "use all your capabilities at all levels and at all international organisations to stop the savagery of the Israeli army and the organised official terrorism against our masses."

In Baghdad, Arafat accused the Israeli defence minister of escalating repression in the occupied territories in an attempt to halt the rebellion.

"It is Rabin who has given orders to his occupation army to kill our people at random and to destroy their houses and carry out a massive campaign of terror in the occupied territory," he said.

Arafat said that he would ask Western European nations to take a more active part in Middle East peace efforts when he meets the foreign ministers of Spain, France and Greece in Madrid next Friday.

The PLO leader said he also will seek more Western European help towards convening an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Arafat also said the PLO has asked through the Non-Aligned Movement for a meeting of the U.N. Security Council to discuss the situation in the occupied territories.

Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories and Israeli lawmakers also rejected Sunday the proposal put forward by Rabin.

France and Greece in Madrid next Friday

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Palestinian leaders from the occupied territories and Israeli lawmakers also rejected Sunday the proposal put forward by Rabin.

Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij rejected Rabin's idea, saying the plan "is not a starter and will lead nowhere."

"I don't believe people will accept it," Freij said on Israel Radio. "People are looking for a genuine, comprehensive peace with Israel. With the PLO representing the Palestinians, the best way is to talk to the PLO through an international conference."

Israeli legislators from right and left-wing parties termed the Rabin plan unsatisfactory.

Gorbachev urges closer links between party and Soviet people

MOSCOW (R) — Mikhail Gorbachev is urging the Communist Party to change its style and methods to avoid what he calls coercion and bureaucracy and forge closer links with the Soviet people.

The Soviet leader, in a speech Saturday to Moscow party officials, said the party had at times failed to take sufficient account of changes in society and must respond better if it was to remain at the country's political vanguard.

"How many matters have we overlooked — promising matters with regard to the life of society, the mood of the people, the processes taking place in the spiritual and cultural sphere?" Gorbachev said in the speech broadcast on television.

Describing the Communist Party as a powerful force at all levels, he said it was time for changes in its style and methods of its work, through correct policies and ideology rather than by coercion and bureaucracy.

"It must be this (powerful force) not through coercion, not through bureaucratic methods, but through policies, through its ideology and through its personal policy. These are the functions of the party and this is the direction in which it must transform the style and methods of its work," he said.

"Our task is to show ourselves as the political vanguard... this means more attention to the primary party organisation... a closer link with the people," Gorbachev declared.

Referring to calls for a multi-party system to promote the cause of democracy, he defended the one-party system as something that had come about for historical reasons and had existed for decades.

But he said the party would set up mechanisms to record public opinion and to adapt its policies accordingly.

Against a background of severe economic problems, Gorbachev has embarked on a radical programme of political reform centering on elections to a new executive parliament.

A poor performance in agriculture and slow growth in manufacturing output has exacerbated critical shortages of food and consumer goods, leading to growing discontent in many parts of the country (see page 6).

Some Soviet commentators have said the problem is now so acute that people are losing faith in the party and Gorbachev's perestroika programme of social, political and economic reform.

Higher committee ends meetings with agreement to boost relations in all fields

Jordan, N. Yemen enter wide-ranging cooperation accord

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan and North Yemen Sunday concluded two days of high level talks and agreed on a number of measures to boost bilateral cooperation in economic, trade, educational, cultural, agricultural, energy, security, research, planning, housing and telecommunications fields.

The talks were conducted by the Joint Jordanian-North Yemeni Higher Committee co-chaired by the prime ministers of the two countries: Zaid Rifai and Abdul Aziz Abdul Ghani respectively.

Following the talks, held at the Prime Ministry in Amman, Rifai and Abdul Ghani signed minutes of the deliberations and said that they would hold biennial meetings alternately in Amman and Sanaa in accordance with terms of an earlier bilateral agreement and will make payment for imported products through the central banks of Jordan and North Yemen.

Engineers from both sides will exchange visits and acquaint themselves with the construction potentials.

North Yemen requested that 45 Jordanian specialists and engineers be allowed to be employed in North Yemen's projects and that Jordan provide expertise and supervisory services in construction projects in North Yemen.

The two sides will exchange legislations on construction work and engineering publications dealing with public works and transport and qualifications of engineers and consultancy firms.

North Yemen will give Jordanian contractors favourable treatment in tenders for projects in North Yemen and allow Jordanian engineers and contractors associations to open offices in Sanaa to study potential schemes.

The two sides will expand cooperation between the energy and power authorities in Jordan and North Yemen. North Yemen will give Jordan favourable status concerning tenders for power projects and allow the Jordan

Jordan will organise a national industrial fair in Sanaa and North Yemen will hold a similar fair in Amman during 1989 with products to be sold directly to the public or to the respective governments hosting the fair.

The two sides will allocate fixed quotas for their respective trade centres in Amman and Sanaa in accordance with terms of an earlier bilateral agreement and will make payment for imported products through the central banks of Jordan and North Yemen.

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U.S. said to set terms for PLO role

ABU DHABI (Agencies) — The United States has offered to endorse a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) role in the Middle East peace process if the PLO expels certain members and disbands a commando unit, a PLO source said Sunday.

The source, who is close to PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat but refused to be named, told Reuters the conditions were relayed by U.S. Ambassador to Tunis Robert Pelletreau.

"The U.S. side said accepting its conditions could qualify the PLO to play a role in the peace process," the source said, declining to specify when the proposal was made. Pelletreau opened the first direct U.S. contact with the PLO in 13 years last month.

"Pelletreau presented a list of PLO leaders whom the United States views as 'terrorists' and wants expelled," said the source.

"Prominent among them is Mohammad (Abu) Abbas, leader of the Palestine Liberation Front."

Abu Abbas is wanted by Washington for allegedly masterminding the 1985 seizure of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro in which an American passenger was killed.

Pelletreau also called for Force 17, originally Arafat's bodyguard unit in his mainstream Fatah faction, to be disbanded.

Arab press reports Sunday spoke of intensifying Arab efforts to arrange a meeting between Arafat with new U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

Abu Dhabi's Al Ittihad said Egypt extended an invitation to Baker to visit the Middle East to pave the way for an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Quoting unidentified sources in Cairo, the newspaper said Egypt's "intensive current efforts with Washington are aimed at arranging a meeting between Arafat and Baker during that tour."

The Saudi Arabian newspaper Al Madina also quoted unnamed sources at the same time as saying consultations were under way to prepare an Arafat-Baker meeting in Tunis in mid-February.

Iraqi leader pays tribute to N. Yemen

NICOSIA (R) — Iraqi President Saddam Hussein left Sanaa Sunday after a surprise visit to North Yemen, whose regular troops fought alongside Iraq in its eight-year war against Iran.

Diplomats said Hussein's talks with North Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh almost certainly covered the economic or military aid which Iraq might provide to North Yemen.

SABA said the two leaders discussed bilateral issues, Palestinian peace moves and United Nations efforts to bring about a lasting peace between Iran and Iraq.

Hussein told reporters before leaving Sanaa that the purpose of his visit was to thank the Yemeni people for their support during the war and not to "lay down Iraqi ideas, initiatives or projects."

SABA also quoted him as saying that the ceasefire gave Tehran an opportunity to rethink its policy in the region.

Asked whether he believed peace had been achieved or merely the conditions for peace, Hussein said: "We want peace...and security for us and others."

"What has happened is a ceasefire... but this gives Iran an opportunity to think deeply on the consequences of the war and the stability of the region to achieve a permanent peace."

Gandhi faces setback in regional election

MADRAS (AP) — Returns showed Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party was heading for a setback Sunday in a southern state poll that is seen as a barometer for his prospect in the national election later this year.

A regional party opposed to the Congress Party was poised for victory in the Tamil Nadu state.

"The voting trend shows a major setback for Gandhi... he will have to accept most of the blame," said the state's top political analyst, Cho Ramaswamy.

The front-runner for the Tamil Nadu state assembly seats was the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) Party headed by Tamil film scriptwriter turned politician Muthuvel Karunanidhi.

With more than half the ballots from Saturday's election counted, Karunanidhi's party or its allies led in 151 of the 232 constituencies, the election control room reported.

The state assembly has 234 seats, but elections in two districts were postponed due to the deaths of candidates.

The Congress Party was ahead in 35 districts. Gandhi must call a national

parliamentary election before the end of the year. The poll will decide which party will govern India in the next five years.

The other two groups in Tamil Nadu to make a showing were rival factions of a party splintered between the wife and the long-time companion of late movie star-politician M.G. Ramachandran.

Former movie actress Jayalalitha Jayaram's faction of the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party led in 37 districts. Jayaram, 42, was a close companion of Ramachandran and played opposite him in many movies.

His widow, 64-year-old Janaki Ramachandran, also an ex-actress, heads a party faction that was leading in 4 districts.

Independents led in 8 districts. Cold weather delayed in the counting in two other districts.

Congress was not expected to win in Tamil Nadu, where its last state election victory was in 1987. But a respectable showing against the strong regional parties would have bolstered the Gandhi party's national image.

Soviet commander denies final Afghan pullout under way

Gorbachev: Afghan intervention is a 'sin'

By Maureen Johnson
The Associated Press

KABUL — A senior Soviet commander acknowledged Sunday that Moscow was ending with a sense of failure its nine-year war to bolster Afghanistan's Marxist government, but he denied the Soviet troop withdrawal had begun.

"We have not succeeded in everything we planned to do here," Major-General Lev Serebrov, political officer at the Soviet military high command in Kabul, told Western correspondents.

"We came here with an honourable task, with open hearts," he said Sunday. "We are leaving and we have a sense of not having accomplished our mission to the end."

Serebrov denied that Soviet troops had begun to pull out of Afghanistan, but he said the Red Army still aimed to be gone by the Feb. 15 deadline set in a U.N.-brokered withdrawal agreement.

His contention that the remaining 50,000 Soviet troops have not yet begun to leave contradicted estimates by Western diplomats here that the withdrawal started in earnest at the beginning of January.

In addition, Afghan troops can be seen manning former Soviet posts on the perimeter of this besieged capital. Afghan rebels fighting to topple the government are entrenched on the outskirts of Kabul.

Serebrov, dressed in a camouflage uniform, chain-smoking and joking intermittently with reporters, said Soviet officers were working to keep open the key Salang Highway leading north to the Soviet border.

Hundreds of fully equipped Soviet troops have been boarding giant Ilyushin 76 transport aircraft landing and departing daily from Kabul's airport.

Evacuation problem

Asked how the Soviets planned to evacuate their 50,000 troops by air and up the hazardous, 400-kilometre Salang Highway by Feb. 15 in bitter, winter weather, Serebrov said simply, "That's our problem."

Questioned about the visual evidence of Soviet troops leaving,

Serebrov said the departing soldiers had merely completed their two-year military service and "are being replaced with new ones."

"We are ready... to end the withdrawal by Feb. 15," he said, speaking through an interpreter. "But we have not yet received the order to start the final stage of withdrawal."

He dodged questions about reports, including from one Soviet source here, that the military high command will move from Kabul to Hairatan on the Soviet border between Jan. 31 and Feb. 2.

Asked how the Soviet commanders would be able to leave if they remained in Kabul until the troop-withdrawal deadline, he said, "We will find a way."

Serebrov acknowledged there "could be some instability" when the Soviet Union pulls out completely, leaving Afghan President Najibullah's government to fight for survival against rebels with a conscript army that Western observers contend is unreliable.

"But I don't think it will be critical," the Soviet officer said.

Serebrov said the Soviets, who this week began a 350-ton airlift of emergency food and fuel to Kabul, "have to feed the whole city now."

Shortages of food and fuel are growing worse in the capital, with bread lines forming in sub-zero temperatures in the early hours. Road are clogged with lines of cars and buses at gasoline stations.

As concern mounted over an economic blockade and violence in the capital when the Soviets withdraw, West German diplomats left Kabul Saturday, following orders from Bonn's Foreign Ministry. Earlier in the week, the British embassy in Kabul warned Britons and nationals of six other countries for which it has diplomatic responsibility to leave without delay.



Palestine regains its rightful role

A DELEGATION representing "Palestine" attended an international conference on education held in Geneva in mid-January under the sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). It was the first time a United Nations organisation used

the word "Palestine" in its official documents after a U.N. resolution was passed recently to that effect. The delegation was headed by Dr. Hanna Nasir (left) and included Dr. Omar Mussalaha, Mr. Omar Sayeh and Dr. Walid Seif.

Iraq frees 255 PoWs today

BAGHDAD (AP) — The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Monday will start repatriating 255 Iranian prisoners of war (PoWs) whom Iraq unilaterally decided to release earlier this month, according to a senior Red Cross official.

The official, Arnold Luthold, told the Associated Press that a plane chartered by the Swiss relief agency will fly about half the Iranian prisoners to Tehran Monday.

He said the plane would return to Iraq in order to take the second batch of PoWs to Tehran Tuesday.

He said the Iranians already have been examined by Red Cross medical staff, but declined to say whether all of them are willing to be repatriated.

Iraq and Iran halted a Red Cross-sponsored exchange of 1,158 sick and disabled PoWs last November amid a dispute over the number of prisoners who were being repatriated.

A total of 155 Iraqi and 56 Iranian PoWs were freed before the operation broke down Nov. 27.

A U.N.-sponsored cease-fire in the eight-year Gulf war took effect last Aug. 20 but peace talks

that started in Geneva five days later are currently stalemated.

The ICRC says it has registered 50,182 Iraqi and 19,284 Iranian PoWs but estimates the total number of prisoners at more than 100,000.

Before the failed November exchange, the two sides had exchanged 765 sick and wounded Iraqi and 613 Iranian PoWs.

On Friday, Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said Iran's tactics were blocking peace talks, citing Iran's refusal to exchange sick and wounded PoWs as a major obstacle to progress in the negotiations.

Iranian magazine proposes ways for compensating Vincennes victims

NICOSIA (AP) — An Iranian magazine has reviewed possible ways the United States could compensate families of 290 people killed when an Iranian Airbus was shot down over the Gulf by missiles from a U.S. warship last July 3.

An article in the Farsi language Hami-o-Naghi (Transport) magazine by Shapoor Khashtoo, an Iranian-born member of the American Bar Association, made several proposals as to how the compensation could be paid, the Iranian News Agency (IRNA) reported.

All 290 passengers and crew aboard Iran Air Flight 655 died when the plane crashed into the Strait of Hormuz after being hit

by two missiles fired from the USS Vincennes.

The plane was flying to Dubai from Iran's Bandar Abbas airport.

Crew-members on the cruiser mistakenly believed they were firing at an Iranian F-14 warplane that intended possibly to attack the ship.

Former U.S. President Ronald Reagan pledged to pay compensation directly to victims' relatives but did not say when or how the payments would be made, or what the amount would be.

IRNA quoted U.S. newspapers as speculating that the U.S. government is prepared to pay up to \$200,000 for each victim of the air disaster.

The agency quoted the article as saying the United States and Iran could sign a compensation accord similar to one agreed for handling financial claims between the two countries in the wake of the 1979 Iranian revolution.

The article said the United States could agree to deposit funds in a bank and appoint an agency such as the International Committee for the Red Cross to confirm the identities of the victims and their families, IRNA said.

But the magazine warned that such a solution would require direct U.S.-Iran contacts, contravening a U.S. refusal to negotiate with the Iranian government over compensation.

Iran launches ruthless crusade against drugs

By Ed Blanche
The Associated Press

NICOSIA — New laws carrying the death penalty for anyone found with even small amounts of illegal drugs took effect in Iran Saturday amid a crackdown in which scores of convicted smugglers already have been executed.

The anti-narcotics laws make the death sentence mandatory for men and women convicted of possessing 30 grammes of heroin, codeine or morphine, or smuggling five kilogrammes of opium or hashish.

The crackdown is the biggest since a large-scale roundup of drug users and pushers in the early days of the 1979 revolution.

Hundreds of people were executed, often on flimsy evidence, by Iran's notorious "hanging judge," Sadeq Khalakhal. Later, his excesses forced Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini to rein him in.

The new campaign followed the Aug. 20 ceasefire with Iraq that halted fighting in the eight-year-old Gulf war and a public outcry against lawlessness, official corruption and an alarming surge in drug abuse that was blamed on hardship caused by

the conflict.

Another factor cited was Iran's religious ban on alcohol, worsening unemployment and the breakdown of political control in the revolution's early days.

'Political problem'

Iran's chief justice, Ayatollah Musavi Ardebili, blamed the narcotics problem on Tehran's enemies.

"The problem... is a political one," he said recently. "The superpowers, just as they fought the Islamic revolution on the battlefield and in the economic field... use narcotics as one method to battle with the people... and taint the revolution."

Official figures on drug abuse in Iran are not available. But Parliament Speaker Hashemi Rafsanjani recently indicated the scale of the crisis by referring to "the devastating problem of drug abuse... a blight that has ruined some of our young people."

Even before the new law came into force, Iranian authorities had rounded up more than 1,000 suspected smugglers and pushers, running them

through tribunals and hanging them as soon as they were found guilty.

On Jan. 7, 19 convicted smugglers were hanged or executed by firing squads. They were interviewed on state television before they were executed.

Media encouragement

Tehran's radical Jomhuri Islami daily hailed the hangings as "a landmark on the path to eradicating narcotics."

But nine days later, Iran's official media said 56 were executed in one day in various cities in a chilling display of Tehran's determination to eliminate the drug plague.

Jomhuri Islami bluntly urged in an editorial that authorities "put an end to the disgraceful life of a few who take joy in ruining a nation only to fill their pockets."

"It's much better if some families lose their breadwinners in this way than a nation loses its youth."

The most conservative daily, Abrar, noted the executions are the "beginning of the uprooting of addiction and narcotics."

Mohammad Mousavi

Khomeini, Iran's hard-line prosecutor-general who rose to fame in 1979 as the spiritual guide of the militant extremists who stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran, said the executions would continue unabated.

"We have no fear of increasing statistics on executions because those who become the victims of the traders of death are far greater in number than the smugglers," he said on Tehran Radio.

The new law was announced Dec. 5 by the 13-member Expediency Council, a body with special powers set up last February by Khomeini to speed up legislation snarled in parliament.

Apart from the death sentences, the law provides for a minimum 20-year prison term for anyone convicted of addicting another person. Those convicted of causing widespread addiction could face death.

The Expediency Council gave drug addicts six months to kick their habits or face imprisonment.

Mokhtar Kalantari, deputy commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Committees, or "Komitehs," which have largely taken over law enforcement

from the police, acknowledged shortcomings in recent years in combating the narcotics trade from neighbouring Afghanistan and Pakistan while Iran concentrated on the war with Iraq. There are extensive poppy fields in Iran as well.

Officials said large quantities of narcotics are smuggled on into Turkey and the Soviet Union.

'To make ends meet'

Former President Abolhasan Bani-Sadr, in exile in France, claimed in a recent New York Times interview that the Tehran government was involved in the drug trade "to make ends meet" and earns \$2 billion a year from narcotics.

Ardebili said Jan. 6 that seized drugs, where possible, are given to the Health Ministry as pharmaceuticals and smugglers' assets "used for the welfare of the dispossessed."

Kalantari said that authorities "expect that 80 per cent of the narcotics trade will be eliminated within two years."

Criticising earlier laws, which carried far less severe penalties, he complained:

"Perpetrators imprisoned for smuggling 75 tons of narcotics are just sitting in jail."

The campaign is being carried out by a special task force of Revolutionary Guards and Komiteh units directed by a team of senior law enforcement officials, including Khomeini, Interior Minister Ali Akbar Mohtashemi and Komiteh chief Serajeddin Musavi.

The campaign is focused primarily on Tehran and major cities, their populations swollen in recent years by peasants flocking in seeking work, and the eastern provinces along the Afghanistan and Pakistan borders, the main smuggling routes.

In November, Komiteh squads razed the Jamsheed red-light district on Tehran's outskirts, branding it a "sanctuary for traffickers."

In recent weeks, anti-narcotics units have carried out dozens of raids on smugglers' caravans and hideouts in Kerman, Sistan, Baluchistan and Khorasan provinces, killing dozens of heavily armed traffickers in gunbattles and arresting scores more, Iran's official media reported.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. envoy sees Sahara solution

ALGIERS (R) — A U.N. envoy said Saturday he believed an end was in sight for the 13-year-old long war between Polisario guerrillas and Morocco in the Western Sahara desert. Speaking after meeting Algerian President Chadli Benjedid, Hector Gros Espiell said the current situation was very favourable. "I believe that with the opening and a spirit of conciliation and flexibility, and the understanding and support of... Mauritania and Algeria, and the open dialogue between the two parties, one will be able to arrive at a solution," the Uruguayan diplomat said. Gros Espiell has been in North Africa for 10 days on his mission to promote a U.N. peace plan calling for a referendum in the former Spanish colony. The choice would be independence or integration with Morocco. A new spirit of optimism has arisen since King Hassan met a delegation of Polisario leaders for the first direct talks between the two sides Jan. 4.

Syrian president congratulates Bush

DAMASCUS (AP) — President Hafez Al Assad cabled his American counterpart Saturday to offer congratulations on his inauguration as president. Assad said in the message to President George Bush that he was happy to express "most sincere congratulations and wishes of success in endeavours for the sake of peace, justice and peoples' rights." The Syrian president also said he hoped that relations and cooperation between his country and the United States would prosper during Bush's term. "For the mutual benefit of our two peoples and the peoples of the world," Bush took office Friday amid predictions by both Arab and Israeli commentators that the changeover from Ronald Reagan's presidency marked a gain for the Arabs.

Iran to free prisoners sentenced during war

LONDON (R) — Iranian television announced an amnesty for all prisoners sent to jail for less than four years by military and special courts set up during the Gulf war. In a report Saturday monitored by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the television said the prisoners would be freed by Feb. 11 to mark the anniversary of the victory of the revolution. The late Shah went into exile in January 1979, opening the way for Ayatollah Khomeini to return from abroad as spiritual leader in February that year.

Somali president holds talks in Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Somali President Mohammad Siad Barre discussed Arab and African issues Sunday with the emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported. An Arab diplomat said the talks were also likely to have dealt with political and economic developments in Somalia and bilateral ties. Somalia has received generous financial aid from Kuwait. Barre is on the third leg of an Arab tour that included Iraq and Egypt.

Top E. German official to visit Israel

HAMBURG (AP) — Communist East Germany's state secretary for religious affairs is planning to visit Israel later this month, a West German magazine reported Saturday. The Hamburg-based Der Spiegel magazine said the visit by Kurt Loeffler would be the first ever by an official of the East Berlin government, which has no diplomatic ties with Israel. Der Spiegel said Loeffler would "sound out" Israeli officials on the possibility of eventually establishing diplomatic relations. The magazine did not cite sources for its report and did not say whether Israel had extended an official invitation to Loeffler.

'Pro-Iranians hold Israeli soldiers'

LONDON (AP) — A document seized by demonstrators who occupied the Iranian consulate in Geneva lists the names of Israeli soldiers missing in Lebanon who are held captive by pro-Iranian groups, according to a British newspaper. The Independent, a London daily, said the list was found among documents seized by activists of the Mujahadeen-e-Khalq, an Iranian opposition organisation, when they occupied the Iranian consulate's office last month. It said a memorandum signed by the counsel, Manuchehr Tale, listed the captured men as Sergeant Zacharia Bamei, Sgt. Levi Sergeant and Corporal Yahuda Kat, who were seized in late 1985 and 1986; Cpl. Yussef Sirk, Sgt. Samir Asad and Cpl. Rahim Levy Alifriky. The newspaper said the man named as Sirk could be Pvt. Joseph Fink, while Alifriky may be a soldier named Levy Alsheikh captured along with him in late 1986. It said Samir Asad is believed to be a Druze who was serving with the Israeli army. The document, dated Sept. 30, 1988, also mentions "Muslim Shaban," who is described as "Mossad (Israeli intelligence) man living in Geneva." The newspaper did not say whether the list identifies the kidnappers. "There has been no news of the missing Israeli soldiers for years despite intense Israeli efforts to locate them," the newspaper said, adding that Israel "has a policy of never abandoning any missing soldiers." The document does not mention Israeli pilot Roni Arad, who was shot down over Lebanon two years ago and is believed held by the Amal group, the newspaper said.

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Are pleased to announce the opening of
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Telefax 684167,
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P.O. Box 926098, Amman-Jordan.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE
18:30 Koran
18:40 Programme review
18:45 Children's programmes
18:50 News summary in Arabic
18:55 World News
18:58 Arabic series
19:15 Local programme
19:40 Programme review
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Arabic series
21:45 Programme review
21:48 Monday Forum
22:20 Variety show
23:00 News summary in Arabic
23:10 Variety show (contd.)

PROGRAMME TWO
17:30 Le Monde et A Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Weekly Sport magazine
19:30 News in Hebrew
19:45 Varieties

20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Afro Afro
21:00 So you want to stop smoking
21:10 Jack and Mike
22:00 News in English
23:20 Jewel in the Crown

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:30 (Sunrise) Duha
11:47 Dhuhur
14:49 'Asr
17:05 Maghreb
18:25 'Isha

CHURCHES

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757.
Teremanta Church Tel. 623666.
Church of the Annunciation Tel.

623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
Rainbow Congregation Tel. 822605.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 821264

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
A slight rise in temperature is expected with the appearance of some clouds on different altitudes. Winds will be northwesterly moderate. In Amman, it will be partly cloudy with northerly moderate wind and calm sea.

Min./max. temp.
Amman 17/9
Aqaba 6/17
Deserts 0/11
Jordan Valley 0/12

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 6, Aqaba 13. Humidity readings: Amman 71 per cent, Aqaba 58 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN:
Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim 896394
Dr. Hisham Kan'an 790286
Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayem 772435
Dr. Awar Musa Al Haj 771020
Firas pharmacy 661912
Fardows pharmacy 778336
Al Ajami pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

Al Salan pharmacy 636730
Yaouub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmed Al Hayek (—)
Al Sharaa pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:
Dr. Ghada Al Akkari 987364
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 620909/93
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police Department 656309/91
Public Security Department 656000 / 685111
Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Complaints 787111

Amman Municipality
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information 12
(directory assistance) 17
Overseas Calls 815615
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 731111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-52000

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Husseini Medical Centre 813813/32
Khaldi Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/86
Akilch Maternity, J. Amn. 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Mafhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 664171/4
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 643845
Al-Muasher Hospital 667279
The Islamic, Abdali 666127/37
Al-Abil, Abdali 777101/3
Italian, Al-Muhajireen 775111/26
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50
Amal Hospital 674155
ZARQA:
Zarga Govt. Hospital (09)983323
Zarga National Hospital (09)981071
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732
IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	480 / 400
Banana	350 / 300
Banana (Mukammur)	300 / 250
Beans	600 / 500
Broad beans	750 / 650
Cabbage	140 / 100
Carrots	220 / 180
Cucumber	220 / 180
Cucumbers	440 / 380
Dates	600 / 500
Eggplant	130 / 100
Garlic	280 / 200
Grapfruit	160 / 120
Lemon	200 / 150
Marrow (large)	250 / 200
Marrow (small)	340 / 280
Orange (French)	560 / 300
Orange (Shammout)	400 / 340
Orange (local)	240 / 200
Onion (dry)	210 / 170
Pepper (hot)	420 / 360
Pepper (sweet)	320 / 260
Potato	250 / 200
Spinach	140 / 100
Mandarin	240 / 200
Tomatoes	180 / 120

Queen to inaugurate new premises of child centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor will Wednesday inaugurate the new premises of the Institute of Child Health and Development, located in Swelleh, north of Amman.

The institute, a joint Swedish-Jordanian project, seeks to further national efforts to develop new and adequate methods and techniques in preventive health care for pregnant mothers and pre-school children.

The project is initially funded by Sweden, through Radda Barnen, the Swedish Save the Children Organisation, but the administrative and financial responsibility will gradually be taken over by the Noor Al Hussein Foundation NHF, Radda Barnen's counterpart in Jordan.

The institute, which started to render services to residents of eastern Swelleh in rented premises in 1986, has a model clinic for pregnant mothers and pre-school children, a child development unit and epidemiological unit.

Radda Barnen, one of Sweden's largest voluntary agencies, was founded in 1919. It is a popular movement with 200,000 supporters which includes members, sponsors and donors.

Jordanian-Egyptian higher committee to review projects

CAIRO (J.T.) — The Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Higher Committee which is due to convene in Cairo by the end of January will review progress on a number of joint economic projects being carried out by the two countries, according to Egyptian Prime Minister Atef Sidki.

Sidki was quoted by Al Ra'i Arabic daily as saying that a special committee will prepare for the coming meeting which is expected to tackle economic, trade, agricultural, industrial, mining, energy, transport, tourism, cultural, health and technical cooperation.

The higher committee, Sidki said, will discuss bilateral trade which this year is expected to amount to \$350 million, up from \$250 million in the past year and \$18.5 million before the joint committee was formed.

Sidki said that the committee's eighth meeting is bound to give real impetus to the on-going coordination between the two leaderships in all matters designed to benefit the people of the two countries.

The coming meeting, he added, will review the work of the joint holding company which is embarking on projects to produce lean meat, animal feed and tourism and fishing industries.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

RIFAI TO DISCUSS AMMAN PROJECTS: The Greater Amman Municipality will hold a meeting Monday under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Zaid Rifai to discuss proposals for developing the central districts of Amman. According to municipality sources, the proposals cover development and reorganisation of streets, and introducing new utilities for the benefit of the capital's inhabitants. They said that several ministers and representatives of the commercial and industrial businesses in Amman will attend the meeting. (Petra)

RICE FROM EGYPT: Ministry of Supply Secretary General Abdullah Hawamdeh, now in Cairo for trade talks, Sunday signed an agreement with the Chairman of Egypt's Al Wadi Company, Ahmad Hureidi, whereby the ministry will purchase 12,000 tonnes of rice from Egypt in implementation of the provisions of a trade protocol signed between Jordan and Egypt early last year. The first shipment of Egyptian rice — 3,000 tonnes — will arrive in February, while other shipments will follow at later dates. (Petra)

HASHISH SHIPMENT SEIZED: Jordanian narcotics agents have seized 450 kilograms of hashish with a street value of JD 450,000. It said the agents arrested the smugglers who had planned to sell the drugs in a neighbouring Arab country. (Petra)

MADABA SEWERAGE NETWORK: The Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) has completed the JD 4 million sewerage network in Madaba district and has embarked on the cleaning and chlorination of the main and secondary water network, which have recently been constructed in the district. WAJ President Mu'taz Bilbeisi said the water networks have cost JD 300,000 and that the secondary networks will be connected to the main network in the near future. (Petra)

Ramadan's cleaning campaign receives positive response

AMMAN (J.T.) — A Jordanian citizen has positively responded to the desert cleaning campaign currently conducted by Arslan Ramadan, another Jordanian citizen.

Taha Hiri provided the voluntary campaign with a car, a driver and a worker to accompany Ramadan. Hiri also helped Ramadan in collecting tyres, cans and garbage alongside Al Azraq Road.

Despite rough weather conditions, the two citizens achieved noticeable success in their campaign.

The Ministry of Tourism supported the campaign by offering cars and workers while Jordan Television broadcast live the voluntary campaign during its main news broadcast.

The campaign comes as a support to the community and contribute to preserving public health and safety. Ramadan's idea was



Taha Hiri received with encouragement from citizens in the private and public sectors.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ An exhibition of works by Contemporary Arab Artists at Al Wasiti Art Gallery.
- ★ The Iraqi Cultural Week which includes an exhibition by the Iraqi artist Salam Al Madamghah and an exhibition of children's paintings and children's literary and cultural books, at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ An exhibition of decorations and Arabic orthography on mirrors by Ghada Al Khatib at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ A plastic art exhibition by Egyptian artist Yassin Ibrahim Mohammad at the Housing Bank Gallery.
- ★ An exhibition of photographic works by Wols (Otto Wolfgang Schulz) at the Goethe Institute.
- ★ The Jordanian plastic art season which includes a general exhibition of works by Jordanian artists at the Professional Association Complex in Irbid.

LECTURE

- ★ A lecture entitled "Islam in the U.S." (in Arabic) by Dr. Yvonne Haddad, professor of Islamic studies at the University of Massachusetts, at the American Centre — 6:00 p.m.

MUSIC

- ★ An artistic cultural evening by musician Nasir Shamma entitled "Musical Taste" at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation — 6:00 p.m.

Queen briefed on Ministry of Education's programmes

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Majesty Queen Noor was Sunday briefed on efforts and programmes undertaken by the Ministry of Education in implementing the recommendations adopted by the first national conference on education held in 1987.

The briefing, presented by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi, came during a visit Her Majesty paid to the Ministry of Education.

The Queen, who toured the operations room of the ministry, paid tribute to the ministry's efforts to offer create the opportunity conditions for education for the future generations and offer the chance for students to draw from their talents.

The Queen said more efforts were needed to protect the environment and instil in students the concept of environment protection and the sense of participation in national anti-pollution efforts in line with the Jordanian traditions.



Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday visits the Ministry of Education (Petra photo).

Local firm gets JD 88,607 contract to develop Aqaba's Shallaleh district

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Urban Development Department (UDD) has awarded a local construction firm JD 88,607 contract to carry out a development project in Aqaba's Shallaleh district.

A contract signed here Sunday provides for the local company, National Contracting Company, to lay water and sewerage networks, construct roads and streets and set up housing for those who will lose their land as a result of the implementation of the project.

UDD Director General Hisham Al Zaghba said that a total of 4,300 inhabitants now living in the old district will benefit from the project which will take 20 months to complete.

The development of the Shallaleh district is the second major project of its kind to be implemented by UDD in the port city, following one carried out last year at Salahuddin district which cost nearly JD 500,000, according to Zaghba.

He told the Jordan Times that his department plans to carry out a JD 3 million project to develop Al Khazzan district, also in Aqaba, probably in June this year.

UDD in January 1988 announced that a total of JD 10 million will be spent on developing areas in Aqaba region as part of the department's third development project which includes housing and other facilities around the city.

NRA symposium discusses Karak's geological situation

KARAK (Petra) — The Natural Resources Authority (NRA) in cooperation with an inter-ministerial committee on Karak Sunday held a symposium on the geological situation of Karak and the problems faced by the city — which includes landslides — and means of addressing these problems in a scientific manner.

Speakers at the symposium outlined the activities of the NRA and the departments concerned, including the drawing of geological and physiological maps of the city, defining the buildings subject to cracks, and monitoring the old cracks. They also looked into means of restoring Karak Castle. Participants also dealt with reasons for cracks, saying that the availability of caves, cliffs, holes, percolation pits and the resulting leakage of water are among the reasons behind such cracks.

They stressed the need for linking the city houses with the sewerage system and for banning the vertical construction or expansion unless the soil tests show that such construction is safe.

The inter-ministerial committee, which was formed in 1988, groups representatives from the Ministries of Planning, Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment, Tourism and Antiquities, the Karak Governorate, Karak Municipality and Mu'ta University.

IRBID (J.T.) — A fire at the biology laboratory of Yarmouk University has resulted in a total destruction of all contents of the laboratory section and furniture and other items found in the second floor of a building which houses, offices, halls and other facilities.

Reports in the local press said that the fire was caused by a short circuit, triggered by a fault in the air-conditioning system.

Civil defence fire engines were called to put out the fire and to prevent its spreading to other parts of the building.

According to the reports, civil defence men were able to isolate the gutted areas from the rest by safely removing cylinders full of chemical substances and by dumping huge amounts of water all around.

No casualties were reported as a result and a special committee from the university administration has been set up to carry out investigations and make an assessment of the cost of damages.

He said the meeting considered agriculture of paramount importance to the Arab World's economy and a means of ensuring food security, and therefore the meeting recommended conducting feasibility studies before any major agricultural schemes are carried out in the Arab World.

Local manufacturers concerned with their export markets, particularly in Saudi Arabia, have asked for a 30 per cent increase to offset the cost of devaluation, the minister said. Saudi Arabia fixed its dinar-riyal exchange rate at 7.5 riyaals to the dinar after the devaluation. Local manufacturers have asked the ministry to mediate with the Saudi government to freeze the exchange rates at the Oct. 88 level of 10.5 riyaals for a dinar. Otherwise, local manufacturers would lose if they did not increase their prices by 30 per cent.

The minister confirmed that both requests, particularly that by local manufacturers was under consideration, but that no price increases will be allowed for the next three to six months, despite pressure from manufacturers and agents.

Malhas said violators of price and quality regulations would be severely punished and urged citizens to report on violators.

There had been a recent increase of 30 to 40 per cent in prices of imported medicines after last year's devaluation of the dinar.

Jordanian manufacturers export \$15 million worth of drugs a year to Saudi Arabia. Malhas said the ministry asked the five leading manufacturers to form a union of drug manufacturers and to divide the manufacturing of certain groups of drugs amongst themselves so as to minimise local competition.

He said that local manufacturers were urged to expand their share in the local market from 30 to 40 per cent previously, to around 80 per cent to reduce dependency on imports.

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Rifai urges ministries to cut down on expenditure

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Zaid Rifai Sunday issued a circular to all government departments and ministries directing them on means of implementing provisions contained in the 1989 budget statement which calls for cutting down on public expenditure.

The circular called on all departments to pursue efforts to collect revenues due to the treasury and to refrain from any plans to spend sums in excess of allocations assigned for them in the budget statement.

The prime minister's circular made it clear that all departments should cut by half transport allowances for all employees, reduce by 12 per cent allocations for fuel, water, electricity and other purchases and to rationalise spending on these commodities. The circular also noted that the government departments have to abide by provisions as stated in the budget which called for reducing their respective shares and contributions to regional and international organisations.

The circular said all departments should adhere to the allocations made for capital projects and should not introduce

amendments or changes in these projects that would incur extra cost, except with prior approval from the council of ministers.

Government subsidies and contributions to various organisations as included in the 1989 budget can only be given in the light of the actual needs of these organisations and in the light of the requirements of their individual projects, according to the circular.

The circular urged all departments to implement schemes for which tenders had been awarded in accordance with a fixed timetable and to ensure that no delays take place. It also cautioned departments not to appropriate any new pieces of land for which no allocations had been made in the 1989 budget.

As to projects that are being implemented with foreign loans and other assistance program-

mes, the circular said the treasury will not pay sums in excess to those allocated for Jordan's share in these projects, and that government agencies which depend on the treasury for financing their projects should shoulder extra cost that could ensue from changes in their plans.

The circular made it clear that government departments can not seek loans for infrastructure or services projects, but loans can be obtained to finance production schemes.

In another circular, the prime minister said that a number of government-owned vehicles which carry "white" number plates such as those owned by private citizens have been found to be used for personal rather than official business.

The circular said that all these vehicles should have their plates changed to "red" like all other government-owned cars, and should not be used except for official business.

The circular said that the Traffic Department, the Audit Bureau and other concerned departments have been entrusted to keep control on the situation, and warned that violators of the regulations will be prosecuted.

Heavy snow blocks roads in south

AMMAN (Petra, J.T.) — Several roads in southern Jordan are closed and some of them are completely blocked by snow, according to the Public Security Department (PSD).

A department statement said that in Shobak and other areas in the south half a metre to one

metre of snow fell, completely cutting off the city.

The statement said that roads near and around Mazar, Mu'ta, Husseini, Taibeh and those leading to Shobak, Wadi Mousa and Eil, within the Ma'an Governorate, are totally blocked with snow.

Some parts of the roads around Tafleh were also closed because of the heavy snow and poor visibility, according to the PSD statement. The Department of Meteorology expected temperatures to drop noticeably at night, warned of frost formation and calling for extra precaution on the roads.

Importers seek further increase in drug prices after last month's hike

By Salameh B. Ne'matt
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Medicine importers in Jordan are seeking a further 10 to 12 per cent increase in prices of drugs on top of a 30 to 40 per cent hike they were allowed last month. Health Minister Zuhair Malhas has announced.

Local manufacturers, who have not yet raised their prices in the wake of last year's depreciation of the dinar, are now demanding a 30 per cent hike, the minister said in an interview with the Jordan Times.

The minister confirmed that both requests, particularly that by local manufacturers was under consideration, but that no price increases will be allowed for the next three to six months, despite pressure from manufacturers and agents.

Malhas said violators of price and quality regulations would be severely punished and urged citizens to report on violators.

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Jordan, North Yemen enter wide-ranging cooperation accord

(Continued from page 1)

Electricity Authority (JEA) to carry out feasibility studies and prepare designs for power distribution networks in two areas in North Yemen.

A joint consultancy firm will be set up to carry out industries that would meet the local markets' needs. The two sides will coordinate work between their respective departments in charge of specifications and measures.

Jordan will offer training courses for North Yemeni personnel in food industries, measurements, equipment testing, analysis of precious metal, quality control, documentation.

North Yemen requested Jordan's expertise in solar power, building material pricing and internal marketing. Jordan agreed to offer facilities of the Royal Scientific Society and the Ministry of Industry and Trade to provide tests on different products upon North Yemen's request.

North Yemen will inform Jordan by March 1989 about its needs of teaching staff for its schools for the coming school year and the two sides will sign an executive programme for the implementation of an educational agreement for the coming three years.

Jordan will offer North Yemeni students 10 scholarships at various university levels and will make available 30 seats for North Yemeni students to study medicine, dentistry, pharmacy, engineering, agriculture and sciences as well as 10 seats for post-graduate studies.

The two will conclude an agreement to pave the way for exchanges of television and radio programmes and launch coopera-

tion between their respective national news agencies.

The two sides will endorse all types of pharmaceutical products produced and registered in either country and call authorities in charge of the distribution of medicine to hold periodical meetings to overcome any obstacles in the exchange of drug products.

The health ministries of the two sides will initiate cooperation in accordance with a 1988 agreement.

Jordan agreed to provide North Yemen with 30,000 olive tree saplings and to offer North Yemeni post-graduate studies in agriculture at Jordanian universities.

Jordan will give training to North Yemeni personnel in agriculture, poultry, animal husbandry, plasticulture, irrigation and plant protection as well as marketing of crops, veterinary skills, pasture and afforestation operations and controlling animal diseases, and planting fruit trees.

The two sides will cooperate in archaeology and antiquities studies through their concerned departments which will exchange documents, publications, and information and will coordinate training programmes for their personnel and involve trainees in excavation work.

They will also cooperate in matters related to civil service and public administration.

Jordan will provide North Yemen with specialists in social welfare, social research, electricity, automotive, electronics and heavy machinery and will coordinate matters related to security and provide training to North Yemenis at the Public Security Department.

The committee approved of plans for cooperation in research

work by the Royal Scientific Society and the North Yemeni Research Centre and said facilities should be given to researchers from either country.

Jordan will provide training to North Yemeni personnel in telephone and telecommunications networks and postal services.

The two sides will cooperate in legislations and laws governing housing and involve Jordanian specialists in helping North Yemen design roads, and others to supervise work in housing projects and train personnel in these fields.

The two sides will launch joint programmes to train personnel in marketing tourist attractions and to encourage tourist groups to visit either country.

The two sides will set up a follow-up committee to supervise the implementation of the agreements and will hold another meeting in Sana'a in July 1989.

According to officials here Jordan exported to North Yemen nearly \$2 million worth of pharmaceuticals, eggs, textiles, cement and glass in the first nine months of 1988, but took no imports in return.

North Yemen already employs 500 Jordanian schoolteachers and

70 medical staff.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that following the signing of the minutes Rifai accompanied Abdul Ghani on a tour of touristic and archaeological sites in Madaba district as well as Islamic sites.

Rifai later hosted a lunch at the Ma'in Spa in honour of the North Yemeni premier and his delegation.

Abdul Ghani visited the Martyr's Monument and reviewed its contents of military equipment and other items that relate the development of the Armed Forces in Jordan. He also called at the King Hussein Medical Centre and the Queen Alia Heart Centre.

Later Sunday, Abdul Ghani and his delegation left for home and were seen by Rifai and other senior officials.

In a statement before departure, Abdul Ghani expressed deep satisfaction over the higher committee's accomplishments, which, he said, are designed to serve the interests of both countries. Abdul Ghani also sent a cable to Rifai thanking him for the hospitality accorded to his delegation during the two-day visit and wished Jordan further progress and prosperity.

Qasem: No solution

(Continued from page 1)

been carrying out comprehensive development plans since 1979 and that it depended on Arab support pledged at the Baghdad Arab summit. "However, these pledges have not been honoured," he noted. "Saudi Arabia was the only Arab country that honoured its financial commitments..."

Qasem also noted that Jordan

was affected by the rising indebtedness and that the adjustment in the value of the Jordanian dinar would help the situation, by providing wider opportunities for exports from Jordan.

"We might need some time to overcome the surprise negative effects of the economic situation," he said. "We hope to overcome this difficulty by intensive and continuous efforts during the next two or three months."

Jordan Times

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Treading a thin line

THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has been subjected to the strictest scrutiny by the international community ever since the start of the Palestinian-American talks last month. Most notably, the American government has put Chairman Yasser Arafat under the most meticulous political microscope ever to gauge the extent of his adherence to the guidelines set out by Washington as preconditions for such talks. As for the Israelis, Mr. Arafat and his organisation were put under constant surveillance and probing for the slightest deviation from the commitments made by the PLO chairman on behalf of his organisation to the community of nations.

And when the mass media attributed to Mr. Arafat threatening words against Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij for proposing a conditional truce between Israel and the Palestinians in the occupied territories all hell broke loose. And even though the PLO leadership did not confirm that it made threats against Mr. Freij, the smear campaign against the PLO and Arafat continued unabated, playing well into Israel's I-told-you-so strategy. Against this backdrop, and in view of the fact that the Israeli side has been waiting impatiently for the slightest slip of the tongue by the PLO to damage and even destroy its hardwon international image as a responsible liberation organisation that practises what it preaches, it would be in order for the Palestinian side to respond to these allegations effectively and swiftly and put to rest the vicious attacks against it.

To be sure, the stakes for the Palestinian side in this matter are indeed high, and not confined to the misguided truce idea put forth by Mr. Freij and which is admittedly wrong as far as not only the greater majority of the Palestinians but also the Arab and non-Arab Worlds. Chairman Arafat was not being whimsical when he said that his own life would be in danger if he were even to suggest such a truce idea. But what is also at stake is whether there is room for honest dissent within the Palestinian movement and whether there could be opportunities for free exchange of opinion put forth with good intentions and in good faith. After all the PLO has distinguished itself as a democratically constituted organisation where Palestinians would be encouraged to speak out freely and submit proposals that may or may not be acceptable by the Palestinian people at large. The right of each and every Palestinian to engage in free and responsible exchange of views must be protected and assured. That is why this whole messy situation needs to be dealt with head on with a view to assure the world that while Mayor Freij's truce idea is totally unacceptable to the Palestinians, for reasons well known to friends and foes alike, he has every right to make his views open on such and other matters touching on the Palestinian destiny.

ARABIC PRESS EDITORIALS

Al Ra'i Sunday dealt in its editorial with a recent proposal by Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in which Rabin offered the Palestinians local elections for autonomy rule. Rabin has not presented any thing new and in fact he has reiterated Israel's adherence to the Camp David accords which had been rejected by all Arabs including the Palestinians, the paper said. But the paper noted that with the new proposals Rabin aimed to find an alternative for the international conference which aims to bring about a comprehensive and lasting settlement and to show the world that Israel was in fact oriented towards peace and it is now offering the Palestinians the chance to achieve that peace. In fact the paper added Rabin's statement aimed at obstructing current international efforts to attain peace following the start of the U.S.-PLO dialogue that could lead to achieving that end. It said that Rabin was also aiming to thwart any European peace initiative because the European Community has lately displayed its total support for an international conference on the Middle East.

A columnist in Al Ra'i daily brings to light an unwholly alliance between the United States and Israel as engineered and approved by the former U.S. President Ronald Reagan. Abdul Rahim Omar says that the alliance on launching counter-terrorist campaigns as revealed last month by the Washington Post entails carrying out a series of terrorist raids on targets in Lebanon with the help of Iranian agents. The plan he adds also entails providing Iran with considerable quantities of weapons if its agents help the U.S.-Israeli raiders to free the hostages in Lebanon. The writer also refers to U.S. agents' visits to Tehran and says the group included Israeli military and intelligence officers. Omar says that the plan reveals that Israel has been able to exploit the United States power in order to achieve its aims in the region and show itself as a true ally helping the Americans to free their hostages. The writer says that Israel was hoping to enhance Iran's military power with the aim of maintaining its aggression.

Al Dustour daily commented on the joint Jordanian-North Yemeni higher committee meetings which opened in Amman Saturday. The paper said that the meetings which are being held in a true Arab and brotherly atmosphere reflect the two countries determination to pursue efforts to attain the aspirations of the Jordanian and North Yemeni people. The meetings are being held in a very favourable Arab atmosphere and at a time when the Arab countries are showing more and more self-confidence and maintaining a great degree of cooperation to serve the higher national interest, the paper added. It said that the fruitful cooperation launched by Jordan with other Arab countries is the driving force behind the Kingdom's determination to carry on efforts for bolstering its economic, cultural, industrial and technical ties with North Yemen. The paper expressed hope that the current meetings in Amman will pave the way for wide avenues of cooperation that can lead to integration in all fields.

Sawt Al Shaab daily also commented on the current meetings in Amman describing them as means to open new horizons of cooperation and closer ties between Jordan and North Yemen. The paper noted that Jordan through its joint committees with Iraq, Egypt and Syria and now with North Yemen hopes to bolster inter-Arab cooperation at all levels. The paper paid tribute to the North Yemeni leadership which it said is aiming to involve Jordan in matters through which it can offer a true service to North Yemen and the Arab World at large.

Weekly Political Pulse

FIRST came the news that Israel's Chief of Staff General Dan Shomron said at an Israeli cabinet meeting that the Palestinian uprising cannot be quelled by military means. Then came the news that Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said that 1978 Camp David accords cannot be imposed upon the Palestinians because they were not a party to the accords. In between came yet another good news that Israeli ex-chief of staff Gen. Mordechai Gur has said that PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was sincere when he extended an olive branch to Israel and that Israel should reciprocate the Palestinian offer of peace. All these observations when juxtaposed form an embryonic change of heart within Israel's body politic which if continued to nurture and develop could serve as a watershed for a general Israeli psycho-political revolution in the direction of a just and permanent resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The opponents of such a trend within the Israeli political structure are clearly working feverishly to drive the moderate forces within the Arab camp into despair before the complete Israeli transformation comes into fruition. This is particularly so with regard to the Palestinian side where the maximalist forces are betting their bottom dollars on the imminent failure of the policy of moderation that Yasser Arafat has recently espoused in spite of the formidable opposition within and without his movement.

But despair may not be realised by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his Likud Bloc in spite of the heavy and risky investment that they have made into their venture provided the forces of reason on both sides of the fence persevere in their determination to give peace in the Middle East a real chance. One cannot belittle the political, juridical and psychological implications of Shimon Peres' sound assessment that the Camp David accords cannot be pushed down the throat of the Palestinians for

the simple reason that the Palestinian side was not a party to that peace agreement. It follows, therefore, that any peace agreement in which the Palestinian side is not a direct party would become flawed juridically and politically. Such a stout remark by Peres should have been uttered a long time ago. But better late than never. What remains now is to convince the Israeli Prime Minister Shamir of the legal importance of Peres' verdict on the peace agreement between Egypt and Israel as far as the Palestinian people are concerned. That should not require much effort since any jurist worth his salt would readily concede to the Peres dictum on the Camp David accords. Much more difficult would be to convince Shamir to heed the alarms sounded by Generals Shomron and Gur. For at a time when Shamir is calling on Israel's Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin to increase the cost of the intifada for the Palestinians, he continues to cling to his worn out hypothesis that the U.S.-PLO talks have encouraged the Palestinian uprising and contributed to the continuation of its flame. Thus Shamir and like-minded Israeli officials are annoyed by the assessments of their military advisers on the nature of the intifada and its prognosis.

In the final analysis even people like Shamir would have to undergo a change of heart on the Palestinian revolt, especially after realising that the more lethal are their measures, applied to quell the Palestinian revolt, the stronger would become the Palestinian steadfastness and resolve to continue their struggle. As Israel's chief of staff has told his country's cabinet members, the Palestinian uprising is essentially a nationalist movement that cannot die out by bullets and bayonets. And when an Israeli general like General Gur, who had spent 30 of his 58 years in uniform fighting the Arabs, something that can earn him any title but sofie, argues in favour of engaging the PLO in negotiations,

then something encouraging is occurring within Israel on which one may pin some hope. Maybe, come spring time, the situation within Israel would have evolved so much that, as projected, a positive movement in the Arab-Israeli conflict would materialise. The importance of cultivating and building up stronger support for the peace process within Israel is all the more urgent in view of the disappointing signals emanating from Washington which appear to suggest that the policies of the new Bush administration would not differ much, if any, from those of Reagan's. With the U.S. State Department becoming stacked up with Kissinger-minded senior officials, one has to brace oneself for the worst possible scenarios. On the top of all this came the signals from Secretary of State James Baker who spoke his piece on the Middle East issues in no unclear terms on the eve of assuming his office. Suffice to recall Baker's words during his confirmation hearings last week before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee when he said that Israel could not withdraw completely to the 1967 lines while with the same breath he asserted that he did not want to "prejudge" a final settlement!

If there is a clear message to the Arab side in all this it is the message to stop relying too much on the U.S. to twist the arms of Israel to accept internationally recognised criteria to settle the Palestinian question and start instead the development of a rapport with the embryonic peace movement within Israel together with the other Israeli forces within the Israeli body politic which have undergone sufficient change of mind and heart vis-a-vis should abandon all hope of ever winning the friends and allies of Israel to the cause of just and permanent peace. Rather it is to compliment such a strategy with the need to shift enough attention to the Israeli house in order to bring about the desired results.

Bush, Baker call for unity in foreign policy

By Ruth Sinai
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President George Bush and incoming Secretary of State James Baker, determined to learn from some bitter lessons of the previous administration, both appealed Friday for unity between Democrats and Republicans in foreign policy.

Minutes after being sworn in, Bush extended a hand to his ideological rivals in Congress. Earlier, Baker urged lawmakers to revive the bipartisanship of days gone by.

For much of the past eight years there has been divisiveness between the Republican executive branch and the predominantly Democratic legislature, which tarnished U.S. standing abroad. The biggest chasm was the Iran-contra affair, which resulted from congressional rejection of an administration request for military aid to the contra rebels in Nicaragua.

Frustrated with Congress, former White House aide Oliver North launched a secret operation to sell arms to Iran and funnel the profits to the contras. Exposure of the affair in 1986

shook the Reagan presidency, although he personally was acquitted of wrongdoing by a bipartisan congressional investigation.

Bush, who claimed to have had little knowledge of North's dealings, faced some sharp questioning at the start of his presidential campaign.

In his inaugural address, Bush traced the roots of the divide between Congress and the administration to the divisive Vietnam war that left domestic and foreign policy in disarray.

"We must ensure that America stands before the world united: strong, at peace, and fiscally sound," Bush said on the steps of the Capitol.

"To my friends — and yes, I do mean friends — in the loyal opposition — and yes, I mean loyal — I put out my hand," Bush said, motioning toward House Speaker Jim Wright and Senate majority leader George Mitchell, both Democrats.

"But when our fathers were young, Mr. Speaker," Bush recalled, "our differences ended at the water's edge."

The reference was to a tradition that presidents were not criticised for their conduct of foreign

policy, but only on domestic issues.

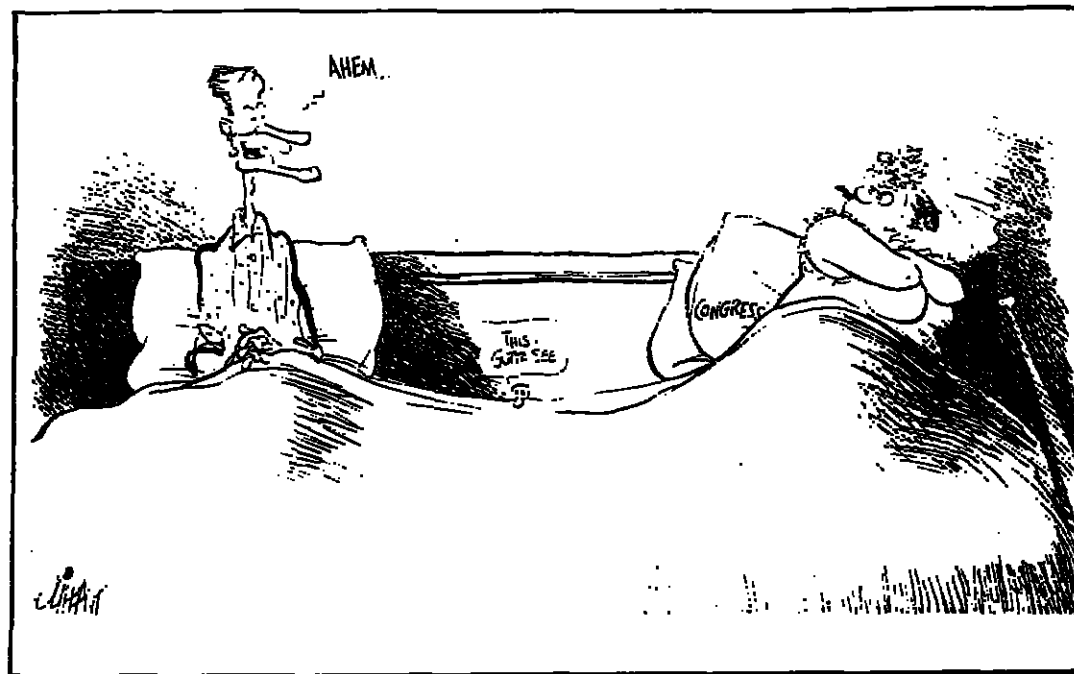
He gave a hint of his approach to world affairs when he said:

"To the world, too, we offer new engagement and a renewed vow: we will stay strong to protect the peace. The 'offered hand' is a reluctant fist; once made strong and can be used with great effect."

Baker echoed the bipartisan theme, saying in a television interview just before the inauguration that "I think it's extraordinarily important that we find a way to get back to bipartisanship in foreign policy."

"That used to be the tradition with the United States. It hasn't been recently. We're successful when we approach things in a bipartisan way. We're unsuccessful when we don't," he said.

During confirmation hearings earlier last week, Baker cited policy toward South Africa as one example of failure due to dissent with Congress. Baker told the Senate foreign relations committee that the 1986 economic sanctions imposed by Congress on South Africa against Reagan's will had been ineffectual in dismantling the apartheid policies of



racial segregation.

He also referred to congressional rejections of administration proposals to sell weapons to Saudi Arabia, saying such moves endanger U.S. interests in the Arab World.

Baker's appeal for unity evoked support among Democrats, who attributed his popularity on Capitol Hill to his practice of consulting with them during his three-year tenure as treasury secretary.

But one discordant note that sounded during the confirmation

hearings could come back to haunt Bush and Baker, despite the obvious good will on both sides: the war powers act.

Congress has sought since the Vietnam war to restrict the war-making powers of the president, who is commander in chief of the armed forces. But since 1973, when the act was passed requiring presidents to get congressional approval for deployment of forces in hostile situations abroad within 60 days, all presidents have rejected the provision as unconstitutional.

Subsequent deployments, such as the operations of the navy in the Gulf during the Iran-Iraq war and the marine peace-keeping force in Beirut from 1982 to 1984, were resolved informally between the president and Congress without invoking the act.

Democratic senator Joseph Biden warned Baker that unless such informal arrangements were stopped, "the hope and desire of both of us to have a bipartisan foreign policy, I think, is impossible. This is the single biggest stumbling block."

North, South Korea in biggest peace drive since Korean War

By Barry Renfrew
The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — South and North Korea are engaged in the biggest drive to ease tension since the Korean War, with the two bitter rivals talking about everything from a non-aggression pact to trade and cultural exchanges.

In recent months they have bombarded each other with a flurry of proposals on ending their 40-year confrontation and both show a willingness to talk that would have been unthinkable even a year ago.

"Expectations are running high for achieving peace and stability on the basis of improved relations with North Korea and working together toward the long-range objective of reunification," the Korea Times said in a Jan. 19 editorial.

But even optimistic observers warn against expecting a sudden breakthrough, adding that long and difficult negotiations will be needed to make even minimal progress. Past talks on improving relations all failed to make progress.

"Just the fact that they are talking is a big step and the wide range of possible contacts is unprecedented," said a Western diplomatic observer, who declined to be named.

The two nations technically are still at war since no peace treaty was signed at the end of the Korean War in 1953 and each claims to be the sole legitimate government of Korea.

The Communist North agreed Jan. 16 to a South Korean proposal to upgrade political talks to the prime minister level in what would be the highest-ever contact. Preliminary talks are to begin in February on procedural issues.

Lawmakers from both sides are to resume meeting Feb. 10 on clearing the way for separate parliamentary talks on a non-aggression agreement and other issues.

South Korean President Roh Tae-woo said Jan. 17 his government was working on a new policy under which the two sides could work as partners. South Korea no longer wanted to see

the North as an enemy, he said.

"Besides clearing the way for trade and exchanges between South and North Korea, I will realise inter-Korean summit talks in the near future and achieve epoch-making progress in resolving the Korean question," he said.

Trade has begun for the first time with Seoul importing North Korean goods in small quantities and South Korean companies are seeking permission for deals worth tens of millions of dollars. The North has indicated it may accept joint economic ventures, according to Seoul officials.

Proposals have been made for personnel and cultural exchanges, including visits by South Korean students, academics and doctors to the North. But the North has indicated such ex-

changes may depend on political progress.

South Korea, long one of the world's most anti-Communist nations, is making major strides in developing ties with the Soviet Union, China and other North Korean allies to ease tension and help persuade Pyongyang to seek progress.

The United States has expressed guarded hope that the new mood could produce major changes. Some 42,000 U.S. troops are based in the South under a mutual defence treaty against the North.

"We think that the efforts that are ongoing now between the South and the North to begin to talk are probably very salutary," U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told the U.S. Senate fore-

ign affairs committee.

The Korean peninsula is one of the world's major trouble spots. Hundreds of thousands of heavily armed troops face each other across their 240-kilometre border. The two archrivals have clashed repeatedly over the years.

The sides have no formal relations, the border is sealed and there are no links except for a single hotline. The Korean peninsula was divided in 1945 by U.S. and Soviet forces that ended the Japanese colonial occupation.

Chances of improving relations depend largely on how serious North Korea is about changing its stance towards the South. South Korean officials and Western diplomats say.

Supreme North Korean leader Kim Il Sung continues to rule

over one of the world's most repressive totalitarian states. Kim launched the 1950 invasion that started the Korean War and still talks of "liberating" the South.

There is no sign of Soviet-style reforms towards openness in North Korea, and there may be little hope of major change while Kim rules. North Korea has often attacked the South and it was widely blamed for the November, 1987 bombing of a South Korean airliner with the loss of all 115 people aboard.

But North Korea reportedly faces growing problems as its economy collapses after years of mismanagement and the South's increasingly powerful economy may be the best hope of help, the officials say. The North may fear international isolation if it continues its belligerent position,

they said.

South Korean officials concede the North may be trying to use the talks to secure withdrawal of U.S. forces from the South. The North has said the annual U.S.-South Korea "team spirit" military exercises must end if there is to be progress in negotiations.

Despite his optimism, Roh warned any progress would be gradual and stressed the need for strong defences and retaining U.S. forces. He ruled out unilateral arms cuts by Seoul.

Roh is also seen as having political motives for pushing for a breakthrough with the North. Roh's government lacks support among many South Koreans and the president hopes his "Northern policy" may reduce domestic opposition, even if it does not succeed.

One thing was for sure: Ronald Reagan

By Walter R. Meers
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an uncertain world, Ronald Reagan stood for certainty. He was unwavering, absolute in his convictions — especially when changing.

Consistency was not a centerpiece of the Reagan White House.

But that style not only worked, it triumphed. The 40th president left office on Friday with the highest public approval ratings since the pollsters started keeping score.

A New York Times-CBS news poll conducted Jan. 12 to 15 showed 68-per cent approval of Reagan's job performance. That's 9 points higher than the farewell approval rating of the late President Dwight Eisenhower. And Reagan made those numbers count politically. He was the first president in 60 years to leave office at the inauguration of an elected successor of his own party.

For Reagan, the genius was not in the details but, more often, in avoiding them. He made U-turns

without signal, and usually without a problem. He campaigned against deficits and tripled them. He won the biggest tax cut in U.S. history and later quietly signed the biggest increase. He denounced Moscow's "evil empire," then fashioned a "new closeness" with the Soviet Union under new leadership.

A prime exhibit: the swollen U.S. budget deficit.

"Time and again I have proposed measures to help curb federal domestic programme spending," Reagan said in the budget he bequeathed to President George Bush. "Time and again these proposals have been rejected by Congress."

He said the deficit problem began with the recession that hit early in his first term, and worsened because he couldn't get half the spending curbs he sought. By Reagan's reckoning, he hadn't changed, conditions had. So he kept making the deficit speech while the deficit soared on his watch.

But in six of the eight Reagan budget years, the budget passed by Congress actually was lower than that proposed by the admi-

nistration.

Supplemental appropriations, approved after the budget resolution was adopted, pushed actual spending higher than the Reagan budget in all but two of those years. Those additions were the handiwork of both Congress and the administration.

Reagan campaigned in 1980 with a promise to balance the budget within a four-year term. The federal debt has nearly tripled, to \$2.6 billion, during his two terms. The average deficit was \$180 billion.

With deficits worsening, Reagan insisted that a balanced budget had not been a campaign commitment: "I've never said anything but that it was a goal."

He promised a military buildup and he delivered, a \$2.4-trillion expansion during his eight years. That fed the deficit and the struggle over priorities that raged through both his terms.

Reagan political challenges stayed the hands of two presidents, Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter, in arms control dealing with Moscow. Ford dropped the word "detente" from his vocabulary while fending off Reagan in

1976. Compared with the Reagan-era thaw, Ford's detente was a chill.

Reagan's farewell address described "a satisfying new closeness with the Soviet Union." He and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev signed the treaty to scrap intermediate range nuclear missiles, met at the summit five times in three years and fashioned a dramatically different relationship between Washington and Moscow.

Reagan said that was possible because "this time, so far, it's different," the Soviet Union has changed.

Reagan changed, too, but he wasn't given to mentioning it. When the Iran arms sales of 1985 and 1986 were disclosed, Reagan insisted he had not tried to trade arms for hostages.

The record showed otherwise. When his own investigating commission said so, the president acknowledged that what he called an attempted opening to Iran had deteriorated into arms for hostages.

Even then, he said "my heart and by best intentions still tell me" it wasn't a trade despite "the

facts and the evidence." Soon afterward he reverted to the no-trade position and stuck with it to the end of his term.

For all that, Reagan's years were years of evolution. "They call it the Reagan revolution and I'll accept that," he said. "But for me it always seemed more like the great rediscovery: a rediscovery of our values and our common sense."

Rediscovery or revolution, it rewrote the agenda, ending an era in which government programmes multiplied to address each emerging problem. Reagan always said that government was the problem, not the solution.

He argued that the government shouldn't have more revenue because it would only spend the money. His parting budget advice was to curb deficits "by continuing to limit the appetite of government."

A troubling legacy to President Bush, the deficits Reagan tried may yet serve the purposes of the Reagan revolution. Limits on government are more easily enforced when borrowing is the only way to pay the bills.



Chico Mendes, Brazilian champion of foresters' rights, who was murdered on 22 December. A landowner, Darli Alves, has been arrested in connection with the shooting. He was captured by the police in a forest hideout.

Strong reaction to murder in Brazil

By Tony Gross

Chico Mendes worked to protect the Amazon rain forest from deforestation and its people from exploitation. He was murdered shortly before Christmas. Tony Gross, who worked with Mendes over a six year period, tells how the murder happened and what may lie ahead.

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil — I was holidaying in Rio, sitting alone at a breakfast table. The front page of the day's *Jornal do Brasil* seemed to have no important domestic stories, so I turned to the inside pages for the first full report of the Pan American aircraft disaster in Britain. The phone rang. It was Beto from Sao Paulo, sounding even fiercer than usual. "There's some bad news, have you heard? From Chico?" I felt my pulse quicken, tragic scenarios flashed across my brain. "No, what's happened?" "They've shot Chico, Chico Mendes. Last night."

So that was it. Of course, I should have guessed. With the shock, anger and resignation came in equal measure. I was conscious of my lack of surprise, and disturbed by it. Had it really been inevitable? Had we known that sooner or later it would end this way? We discussed practical things: how to inform those outside Brazil who had known Chico; how people from Rio and Sao Paulo would be able to get across Brazil to Acre for the funeral on Christmas Eve. I was glad when we rang off.

Folding away the paper I looked again at the front page. This time I saw the headline: Trade union leader shot and killed. The news had been there all the time. I had read it but had failed to see. Perhaps this was not so surprising, it was after all not such an unusual headline. Chico's death was No. 90 in the catalogue of murders of Brazilian rural workers and their supporters — pastoral agents, lawyers, education workers — during 1988.

That same week had seen the trial of a gunman hired to kill the Bishop of Goias in Brazil's mid-west who had incurred the hatred

of local landowners by taking the side of the peasants in their fight to resist illegal eviction by ranchers. The shot had missed the bishop, but had struck the local priest, blinding him. He was Italian and the foreign publicity, together with the irrefutable evidence, led to the local court sentencing the gunman to 12 years.

This had been hailed as an advance, since the same court had previously absolved hired guns in similar cases. Yet the real culprits were not charged. In a travesty of justice, according to Italian investigators, one of the gunman's paymasters acted as his defence lawyer and another continues in office as local mayor.

I remembered a peasant I had met earlier in the year in a small town in the eastern Amazon. The region was alive with land conflicts, provoked by developments associated with the Carajas mines being brought into operation with EC, Japanese and World Bank funds and designed to guarantee cheap iron ore supplies to northern steel industries. The town had been the site of previous massacres of rural workers and my acquaintance had just been elected president of the local rural workers' union. He told me that his twin ambitions were to improve the lot of his members and to survive his term of office, though he thought the latter difficult.

The threats were such that he never slept two nights in the same place, never revealed his movements and couldn't use public transport. When we parted I felt wretched. What do you say to someone marked down to die? Good luck? Hope to see you again?

Chico was president of the rural

workers' union in Xapuri, a small town in the western Amazon state of Acre, near the Bolivian border. He was 44, had married late and had two young children, a daughter of four and a son of two. His parents had come from the dry north-east during the World War II, sent to cut rubber for the allied war effort. Chico was born and brought up in the forest, learning the skills of a seringueiro, a rubber-tapper.

Traditionally, seringueiros were victims of a system of debt-bondage, but during the 1960s and 1970s the old system began to collapse in Xapuri. Ranchers from southern Brazil began to acquire rubber estates, clearing the forest for pasture. Seringueiros were evicted, often brutally. Others retreated further into the forest and continued producing on their own account, victims of exploitative relations with local merchants.

In the early 1970s the rural workers' union of Xapuri was founded, and Chico was soon elected president. A modest and unpretentious man, he was nevertheless a natural leader. As the conflicts over land intensified, the union developed the technique of the "empate", or "stalemate". During the dry season ranchers hire labourers to clear the forest for pasture. Just before the rains come in September the cleared areas are fired.

Faced with eviction and loss of livelihood, the seringueiros began to assemble en masse at sites about to be cleared, preventing the clearing and persuading the labourers to lay down their chainsaws and go home. Over the last ten years during the months of June, July and August the forests of the upper Acre valley have been the scene of numerous "empates".

Over the same period others began to realise that not only did this movement represent a fight for social justice, it was also a fight against environmental degradation. With the help of a

small group of educators and anthropologists, and with modest funding from aid agencies, the union began to invest in co-operatives, schools and health posts.

Early results showed that, once free of debt bondage and economic exploitation, the seringueiros' production was sufficient to permit a substantial increase in their standard of living. In addition, the communities proved themselves able to administer their own schools and health posts.

Armed with these arguments the seringueiros were able to propose a socially-equitable and environmentally-sustainable development policy for the region based on securing and improving their way of life, rather than investing in ranching and colonisation projects.

Chico played a leading role in the advocacy of this: negotiating with state and federal governments, with the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, presenting the seringueiros' views as a member of the CUT — the Brazilian trades union congress. He travelled to Europe and to North America. He received two international prizes.

Recently it seemed as though perhaps all of this was bearing fruit. There has been increasing official questioning of a development model based on destruction of the forest. The first "extractive reserves", where seringueiros will have secure access to the forest to pursue their way of life, are being created.

Yet Acre is not immune to the tensions and violence that characterise rural Brazil with the disappearance of any possibility of peaceful agrarian reform. An "empate" in July last year led to the shooting of two unarmed seringueiros by members of the ranchers' family. The heads of the family, two brothers wanted for murder in other states, issued threats against Chico.

As the war of words heated up he was provided with constant police protection. This proved to be inadequate. On Thursday 22 December Chico sat down to supper with his family and police escort in his modest wooden house ironically located on the same block as Xapuri's military police detachment.

When he went in the dark to the privy at the bottom of the garden he was hit by a single shot in the chest fired by a gunman who now appears to have waited the whole day in the undergrowth. Chico was hit at close range, managed to stagger back to the house, murmured, "this time they got me", and died at the feet of his daughter.

The local radio went off the air, some say because the seringueiros in the forest would not hear of the murder in time to arrive in Xapuri for the funeral (the owner is a brother of one of the suspects). In the event a reported 4,000 people accompanied the cortege. Orators at the funeral, including those seringueiros who will assume the presidency of the union and the leadership of the movement in Chico's place, promised that the work would continue.

This will be the case, as the movement did not depend simply on Chico. The ranchers have threatened a further five leading figures in the union, but the government has been taken aback by public reaction to Chico's death. Moreover, the UDR, an organisation of right-wing landowners which has been accused of running a covert military wing, has been forced publicly to distance itself from the killing.

So out of tragedy, hope could yet be born — Panos features.

Greedy cities devour all

Many Third World cities are now under severe pressure — as housing, sanitation and transport systems struggle to keep pace with the millions of new arrivals each year. Stanley Kelly looks at the environmental implications of this explosive growth.

THE GLOBAL landscape is becoming a cityscape. For more and more people the horizon is turning from green to grey. The numbers living in cities have almost tripled since 1950, according to this year's "State of World Population" Report from UNEPA.

By the year 2000, 75 per cent of Latin America's population, 42 per cent of Africa's and 37 per cent of Asia's will be urbanised. The U.N. report says that if cities continue to grow at current rates the urban environment could become "unlivable".

Where have all these people come from? Most will actually have been born in cities. But these streetwise kids are also being joined by refugees from the countryside — whole families fleeing poverty, families who cannot make a living from the land. In Metro Manila, for example, some 55 per cent of the city's growth between 1970 and 1980 was as a result of migration.

If you point out to them the barrenness and squalor of the city streets they will often point to the barrenness and hopelessness of the land they have fled. They will tell you of bald hillsides that once were clad with life-giving trees; to steep dusty slopes that have been overcultivated to exhaustion. Crop yields have shrunk and with the felling of the trees the farmland is more susceptible than ever to droughts and floods. In the first half of the 1980s at least 10 million Africans were forced off their land, largely by extended drought.

But the new arrivals then have a profound impact on the city environment. Many will work in the "informal sector" — as street-vendors of everything from casual shoes to more overworked and yet more dangerous. The houses tumble out onto the pavements. Overloaded sewerage systems spill out into the streets. And those who live in the poorest housing are most exposed to environmental hazards. The floods in Rio de Janeiro in February 1988 took their greatest toll in the favelas — the shanty-towns.

According to the World Commission on Environment and Development the Third World will by the end of the century "have to increase by 65 per cent its capacity to produce and manage its urban infrastructure, services and shelter — merely to maintain present conditions".

And the new city-dwellers still have an impact on the rural environment. The most obvious way is through the expansion of the cities themselves — the voracious suburbs and shantytowns spread out and swallow up more and more adjacent farmland. The UNEPA Report points out that even in the United States, a country of low population growth, some 2.5 million hectares of farmland were lost to urban sprawl during the period 1967-75.

But cities consume much more than land. On average a city of one million inhabitants consumes every day about 625,000 metric tons of water, 2,000 metric tons of food and 9,500 metric tons of fuel. Most of the food and water will have to come from the rural areas. But so will much of the fuel. A study in Kenya for example showed that the major contribution to deforestation was not the villagers' use of wood for fuel

In the cities the imbalance they come up against is primarily that of income. No matter how hard such people work — often up to sixteen hours a day — they will be unable to build the houses or buy the services that will enable them to live in a healthy environment. The U.N. Report cites a survey of Bombay's street-dwellers. A high proportion of them were wage-earners, mostly labourers or street traders, but the majority were earning less than \$1.80 a day.

Governments until recent years have had little success in resolving population imbalances. If anything they have intensified the gap between the cities and the countryside. Feeling under greater political pressure from the more organised and politicised urban population, they spend more money on the cities. The World Health Organisation calculated for a range of countries in 1973 that 74 per cent of their urban populations had access to safe drinking water compared with only 39 per cent for the rural populations. Similarly while 52 per cent of urban dwellers had access to sanitation facilities the figure was only 14 per cent for rural areas.

Discrimination against the rural areas is often reflected too in food prices. Pressure from the urban population will often keep down official food prices — reducing the potential income for farmers. So moving to the city is for most people an entirely rational decision.

Diluting such concentrations of

people will need action at many levels. Redistributing good land and rewarding farmers better for their work would encourage them to become more productive. Ensuring that they have the highest possible standard of health care will also give them greater security. Family planning services would also enable them to choose the most appropriate number of children for their own circumstances. Many parents will have large families if they feel there is a risk that one or more may die and many rural parents will send one or more children to work in the city to offer an extra form of insurance.

Those who do decide to migrate need to be directed away from capital cities — indeed from any of the many huge cities that are becoming increasingly common in the Third World. In the cities too the improvement of health services can help reduce the need that many parents feel to have large families. And education — particularly of women — also has an important part to play. Many studies have shown that the longer women have spent at school the more likely they are to choose smaller families.

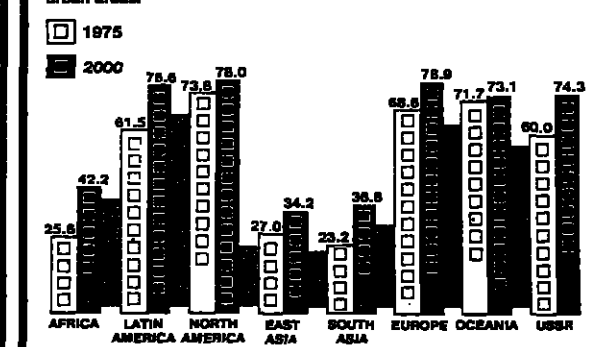
Environmental destruction usually refers to the damage humanity does to Nature. But if we insist on simultaneously degrading both the rural and the city environments the implications for the people who live there may in the long run be even more severe — UNEPA features.

City limits

The world's urban population has tripled since 1950, according to the 1988 State of World Population report. But big cities concentrate both consumption of resources and production of waste. Uncontrolled growth threatens to overwhelm transport, health and sanitation systems in many cities.

HALF THE WORLD IN CITIES

By the year 2000 nearly half the world's population will be living in towns and cities. The figures show the percentage of the population living in urban areas.



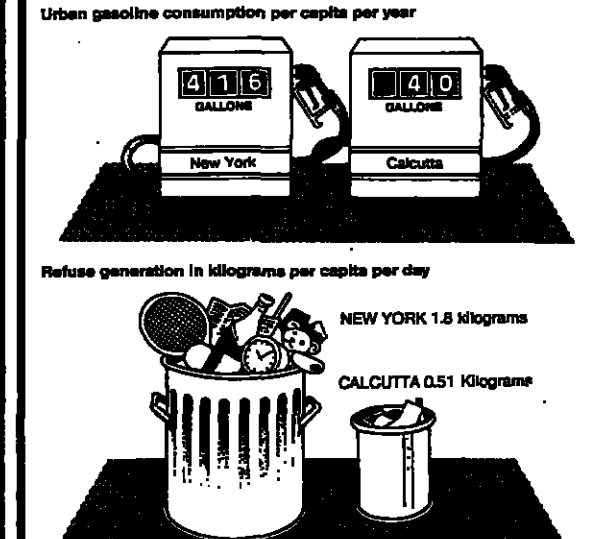
MEGACITIES

Ten of the world's largest cities will be in developing countries by the year 2000.

	1988	2000
TOKYO	117	125
MEXICO CITY	113	125
SAO PAULO	113	125
NEW YORK	113	125
SHANGHAI	113	125
CALCUTTA	113	125
BUENOS AIRES	113	125
RIO DE JANEIRO	113	125
BEIJING	113	125
SEUL	113	125
LONDON	113	125
GUANGZHOU	113	125
LOS ANGELES	113	125
OSAKA	113	125
BEIJING	113	125
MOSCOW	113	125
PARIS	113	125
JAKARTA	113	125
TAIPEI	113	125
TEHRAN	113	125
DELHI	113	125
MANILA	113	125
CHICAGO	113	125
KARACHI	113	125
BANGKOK	113	125
LIMA	113	125
MADRID	113	125
HONG KONG	113	125
LENINGRAD	113	125
CAIRO	113	125
DACCA	113	125
BOGOTA	113	125
BACHUQAL	113	125
SANTO DOMINGO	113	125
PHILADELPHIA	113	125
SHENZHEN	113	125
NAPLES	113	125
PUSAN	113	125
BANGALORE	113	125
SYDNEY	113	125
CARACAS	113	125
LAJOS	113	125
ROME	113	125
LAGOS	113	125

RICH PICKINGS

Rich cities have a bigger impact on the environment than poor cities. Cities in the industrialized world consume more energy per person and produce more waste per person than cities in the developing world.



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Indonesia to seek OPEC quota increases if price rise continues

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia will propose raising oil output quotas at the next Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meeting if prices continue rising, according to Oil Minister Ginanjar Kartasasmita.

"If prices continue jumping higher and higher, Indonesia will suggest OPEC increase quotas to defend the \$18 benchmark price at the next OPEC conference in June," he told reporters Saturday after meeting President Suharto.

Ginanjar said OPEC must take care that prices do not jump too high too fast because as that might create "market shock leading to oil substitution and energy diversification."

"We are satisfied with the \$18 level, which we view as acceptable to both consumers and producers. The \$18 price does not set off alarms in the world economy."

"We hope this price can be defended, but we are not overly optimistic because prices at the moment are being influenced by several factors," he said.

These included OPEC's agreement in November to maintain quota restrictions, unexpected problems which have cut North Sea output, and increased demand in the United States.

"The prices can be defended as long as OPEC consistently maintains the agreed output ceiling," he said.

Ginanjar, who has just returned from a tour of Latin American oil producers outside the OPEC, said Mexico was willing to cut output to help stabilise prices.

"How much they will cut will be discussed soon in London when OPEC and non-OPEC senior officials meet," he said.

Indonesia has set the price of its main crude, for February delivery at \$17.56 a barrel, the first time it has been able to ask the official figure since prices started dropping under a glut of overproduction last April.

"President Suharto said achieving the oil price for February proves OPEC has returned to its unity and solidarity and is implementing the agreement it has taken," Ginanjar said.

Ginanjar estimated world demands for OPEC oil at 19 million

to 19.2 million barrels per day. The oil producers group has set an output ceiling of 18.5 million barrels a day.

London talks

Eight non-OPEC oil producing nations will meet with OPEC next week, setting the stage for an eventual output cut of about 200,000 barrels per day to help maintain higher world oil prices, U.S. oil analysts said.

But the meeting, which is intended to initiate a long-term cooperative effort between the two rival groups of producers, is unlikely to result immediately in an output cut, they said.

On Wednesday technical experts from Angola, China, Colombia, Egypt, Malaysia, Mexico, North Yemen and Oman will meet in London.

The following day, the group will hold talks with OPEC experts from Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. The Soviet Union, the world's largest oil producer, will send an observer to the discussions.

Representatives from Alaska and Texas, the two largest U.S. oil producers, and the Canadian

province of Alberta are also expected to attend.

Last April, six non-OPEC producers met with OPEC and offered to cut exports by five per cent if OPEC did the same, but the plan was discarded when OPEC members failed to agree to a reciprocal reduction.

Next week's meeting, however, is not intended to be a gathering of decision makers, and a concrete plan is unlikely to come out of the session, U.S. analysts say.

OPEC Secretary General Subroto, who will attend, said the meeting would discuss oil market forecasts for 1989 and the likely impact of OPEC's pact which set a production ceiling of 18.5 million barrels a day for the first half of 1989.

"It is my understanding that there will be a follow-up meeting in late February or early March at a higher level to formalise the dialogue and to sign a deal whereby non-OPEC will meet again and agree to cut output about 200,000 barrels per day," said Nauman Barakat, vice president with Prudential-Bache Securities Inc.

As long as oil prices are insufficient to generate an adequate cash flow for some non-OPEC nations, they will have the

motivation to support OPEC actions, said Paul Ting, analyst with Oppenheimer Inc.

Barakat said it was his understanding that Saudi Arabia was seeking a 300,000-bpd reduction from the non-OPEC producers, but the chief economic adviser of the Sultan of Oman, who is coordinating the meeting, was reported to have said that a 300,000 bpd cut would be too tough to achieve. He mentioned the possibility of a 205,000 bpd reduction, according to Barakat.

It is unclear whether such a cut would be a reduction in production or exports, analysts said.

The eight non-OPEC nations produce over eight million bpd, so a 200,000 bpd cut would represent only a slight draw from the market.

Analysts said an announcement of a production or export cut by non-OPEC nations would give an immediate 50-cent boost to crude prices.

On the New York mercantile exchange, the benchmark U.S. grade of oil, west Texas intermediate, has been trading in a range of about \$19.10 to \$19.45 a barrel in recent days. But it fell 21 cents Friday to \$19.07 on profit-taking following six consecutive days of advances.



An onion farm in the Soviet Union

Soviet agriculture slows, industrial output inches up

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Agricultural production grew more slowly in 1988 and the grain harvest fell but industrial production went up slightly, the State Committee for Statistics says in its annual report.

State spending is still growing faster than income in the Soviet Union and the financial situation "remains difficult," according to the report, published by the state news agency TASS Saturday.

Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and others have said that failure to produce more food could weaken support for his political and economic reforms.

The report also said the economy "sustained considerable losses" from the earthquake in Armenia Dec. 7, which took 25,000 lives and devastated many towns and cities.

National income grew to 625 billion roubles (\$1,011 billion). Earlier this month TASS said this was up 4.4 per cent over 1987 but that pay was growing faster than productivity.

This appears to raise the prospect of inflation, which has finally been acknowledged as a problem by Soviet authorities. But the report published Saturday gave no estimate for inflation in 1988.

Agricultural production in 1988 was 461.6 billion roubles (\$746 billion) — up by just 1.6 billion roubles (\$2.58 billion) or 0.7 per cent over the previous year, TASS said.

The 1988 grain harvest was only 197 million tonnes, the report said. That would make it the smallest since 1985, when it was 191.7 million tonnes.

The harvest was slightly better than the 195 million estimate given Monday by Stepan Sitaryan, first deputy chairman of the State Planning Committee, but lower than predictions by Western experts.

It fell far short of the 235-million-tonne target in the state plan and will mean more buying on the world market by the Soviet Union, the world's biggest grain importer.

Potato, vegetable and fruit output fell in many parts of the country and targets for deliveries to the state were not met, TASS said.

The rate of growth in farm production slowed considerably in the past three years, despite measures to encourage production and calls to overcome chronic shortages. Agricultural production grew by 1.8 per cent in 1987 and by 5.1 per cent in 1988.

Meat and egg output went up by two per cent and milk by three per cent against 1987, TASS said.

Industry

Industrial production in 1988 was 903 billion roubles (\$1,461 billion), an increase of 3.9 per cent over 1987 and a small improvement on the previous year's growth of 3.8 per cent.

The growth rate in the important machine-building industry was 1.6 times the overall industrial growth rate but modernisation targets were not reached, according to the report.

Factory and office workers received an average of 217 roubles (\$351) a month and collective farm workers 178 roubles (\$288) a month in 1988, compared to 203 roubles (\$328) and 170 roubles (\$275) in 1987.

There were 191 registered joint enterprises with foreign companies at the end of the year, most of them with capitalist countries, TASS said.

Other statistics showed that 4.2 million Soviet citizens travelled abroad in 1988. In the past Soviet officials have said that about four million citizens travelled abroad every year.

Trillion-dollar debt crisis rears its head again

By Stephen Jukes
Reuters

LONDON — A mysterious computer breakdown at Brazil's central bank a few days ago, delaying payment of \$500 million to creditors, was a blunt reminder the Third World debt crisis had not gone away.

Brazil, creaking under the pressure of rampant inflation and a \$120-billion debt burden, has promised to pay its banks later this week, but the computer hitch sent jitters through the world's financial community and concentrated the mind.

More than six years after Mexico's near financial collapse heralded the start of the debt saga, industrial powers are once more seeking a formula to tackle the developing world's \$1.3-trillion-burden.

European monetary sources said the new U.S. administration, spurred into action by a string of economic crises in Latin America, has begun

sounding out its Western allies on a new strategy it hopes to have in place by April.

An expected slowdown in world economic growth this year and rising interest rates have injected a new sense of urgency into talks, but some economists say the industrial world is doing too little and must adopt more radical solutions.

"The timeframe on some of the new schemes to reduce debt is eight to 10 years — developing countries can't afford to wait that long," said Roger Lawrence, economist at UNCTAD, the Geneva-based United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Lawrence was one of the authors of a controversial 1988 report urging banks to write off 30 per cent of debt to poor countries but monetary sources said the Group of Seven (G-7) industrial nations had less radical treatment in mind.

The United States, Japan, West Germany, Britain,

France, Canada and Italy are due to meet Feb. 2 and 3 in Washington for what has been billed as a "get-to-know-you" meeting with President Bush's new economic team.

The agenda will focus on this year's dollar surge but also on ways to tackle the Third World debt problems: in the words of one central banker, "evolutionary, not revolutionary" changes.

A consensus has not yet emerged and the complex politics of international cooperation could lead to serious differences with Japan and France, also eager to assume a leading role.

European central bankers believe Washington wants to be able to unveil a new three-pronged strategy at the G-7's next scheduled meeting at International Monetary Fund talks in April.

Baker plan

Secretary of State James Baker, author of a now largely

defunct 1985 plan that foresaw poor nations growing out of their debt, gave clues to the new approach last week.

An emphasis on "voluntary debt reduction." This can be done by a nation buying back debt at less than its face value or by banks swapping loans for higher quality bonds, a technique already used by Mexico.

Closer cooperation between banks and the World Bank to speed the flow of funds through so-called co-financing projects.

A new campaign to persuade banks to step up lending. The World Bank estimates the net outflow of resources from the 17 poorest nations to the industrial world totalled a record \$31.1 billion last year. Bank credits have almost dried up.

The seven industrial nations sealed an accord at last September's IMF meeting in West Berlin to relieve the debt burden of the poorest African

countries.

But the new initiative must tackle "middle income" countries, the Brazils and Mexicos of the debtor community where default could wreak havoc among creditors.

U.S. officials are adamant that the first Baker plan did not fail, arguing that by staying off problems it bought time for banks worldwide to step up reserves against a possible default.

But nor did it generate sustained growth in the developing world and they concede that time has now come for a new thrust, already being dubbed by economists as "Baker II."

There is no shortage of schemes to vie with "Baker II," with Japan and France pushing their own plans, although some capitals including Washington have criticised them for being vague. "Both plans are obviously in some difficulty," said UNCTAD's Lawrence.

Reformer urges new communist trade bloc

BUDAPEST (AP) — Leading economic reformer Rezső Nyers said in an interview published Saturday that Hungary and other reform-minded communist countries could integrate economically.

Recently appointed minister of state for economic affairs, Nyers is considered the father of Hungary's economic reforms of the late 1960s that established this country as a Soviet bloc pioneer in supporting profit-oriented business thinking and private enterprise.

He said attempts at reforms within the Soviet-led trading bloc Comecon had failed because of the diverse economic systems of its 10 member countries, the Communist Party daily Nepszabadsag said.

Hungarian economists and trade officials have grown in-

creasingly critical of Comecon and have sought ways of reducing what are seen as burdensome obligations to other countries in the bloc, especially the Soviet Union.

Hungary this year is introducing more sweeping economic reforms, including Eastern Europe's first stock exchange, to encourage the flow of foreign capital into the stagnating economy and introduce greater market forces into prices and production at home.

Nyers said an integration of East European countries could evolve along the lines of the Benelux countries — Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg — which signed a treaty for economic integration in 1958.

He was quoted as saying it was "conceivable" that mostly within the framework of Comecon,

countries with similar economic conditions could gradually form their own integration like that among the Benelux countries.

He said such a group could comprise Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and possibly Poland, Nepszabadsag reported.

Non-aligned Yugoslavia is not a member of the Soviet-led trading bloc, but the Communist country is in the process of introducing more market-oriented economic reforms in an effort to help reduce rampant inflation and control the country's foreign debt.

Poland has also announced plans to introduce far-reaching economic reforms.

Sweden sees gas deals with Soviet Union, Norway

STOCKHOLM (R) — Sweden is likely to sign contracts later this year for the supply of six billion cubic metres of natural gas from Norway and the Soviet Union, according to energy officials.

Talks held in Stockholm with Soviet and Norwegian officials this week had been positive, according to a spokesman for Swedegas AB, which is controlled by state-owned electricity company Vattenfall and which will be responsible for the largest part of the gas supply contracts.

"Swedish efforts have been consolidated and I think we'll sign a formal contract by this

autumn," the spokesman, Roger Johansson, said.

Swedegas, OK Petroleum AB, a company jointly owned by Swedish cooperatives, and privately owned conglomerate Axel Johnson AB have discussed the possibility of the import this week in the framework of annual trade talks with the Soviet Union and Norway. A fourth company, Sydkraft AB, was also involved.

Johansson said the gas contract would provide Sweden with about 2.5 billion cubic metres of Soviet natural gas per year. In addition, it would seek to import about three billion cubic metres of gas from Norway.

Sweden is also planning to expand a Danish contract for 600 million cubic metres per year to one billion.

Johansson said that although most of the gas would be used to reduce Sweden's dependence on oil and coal, the deals were part of its efforts to move toward a non-nuclear future by the year 2010.

Sweden has relatively high energy demands because of its cold climate and energy-intensive industries but it has negligible reserves of oil, gas or coal.

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Tokyo negotiates new budget

TOKYO (AP) — The government has negotiated on a proposed new budget that reflects Japan's growing contribution to international economic development and its desire to limit defence spending.

The Finance Ministry's proposed budget, released this week, would raise total government spending by 6.6 per cent — the largest rise in eight years — to 60.41 trillion yen (\$469.93 billion), from 56.70 trillion yen (\$441 billion) in the initial budget for fiscal 1988.

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AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Sunday, Jan. 22, 1989 Central Bank official rates					
Buy	Sell	French franc	Japanese yen (for 100)	77.9	78.3
U.S. dollar	488.0	490.0	Dutch guilder	382.0	383.9
Pound Sterling	867.1	871.4	Swedish crown	235.2	236.4
Deutschemark	265.6	266.9	Italian lira (for 100)	36.2	36.4
Swiss franc	512.7	514.3	Belgian franc (for 10)	127.0	127.6

ECONOMIC NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran, Qatar to set up shipping line

NICOSIA (R) — A Iran-Qatar shipping company will soon start carrying cargo and possibly passengers between the Iranian port of Bushehr and Doha. Iran's news agency IRNA said Sunday. Approval for the service, which IRNA said would cut the cost of shipping Iranian products to Doha by 30 per cent, was reached Saturday between Qatari officials and a visiting Iranian delegation. Iranian exports to Qatar currently pass through Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. Iran's major exports direct to Doha would be fruit, vegetables and cattle, reported IRNA, monitored in Cyprus.

Alexandria port, oil terminal reopen

ALEXANDRIA (R) — Egypt's principal Mediterranean port of Alexandria and a nearby oil terminal reopened Sunday after weather improved, harbour officials said. High seas and strong winds closed the port Saturday, trapping four ships inside and another six outside. Four ships resumed loading at the Suez-Mediterranean Arab Petroleum Pipelines Company (SUMED) oil terminal, 32 kilometres southwest of Alexandria which was also closed due to bad weather, they added.

Venezuela to renegotiate debt

BONN (R) — Venezuelan President-elect Carlos Andres Perez has said he would seek a rescheduling of his country's \$32 billion foreign debt, the fourth largest in Latin America. Perez, a Social Democrat who takes office Feb. 2, told reporters during a visit to Bonn that democracy in Latin America was threatened by the crippling debt burden. "Venezuela is the only Latin American country that has paid not only interest but also principal," he said. "This cannot go on. We will have to seek a delay in payments." He said Latin American debtor nations must coordinate their debt repayment talks through the so-called Group of Eight. The Group of Eight, initially formed to promote peace in Central America, is made up of Mexico, Argentina, Venezuela, Panama, Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia and Peru.

Europarlament backs hormones ban

STRASBOURG (AP) — The European Parliament has adopted a resolution backing the European Economic Community's (EEC) ban on imports of hormone-treated meat and urged the United States "to suspend its countermeasures" until a dispute over the ban is settled. The United States imposed 100 per cent duties on a range of European food imports as of Jan. 1, the date when the EEC ban took effect. The U.S. duties affect \$100 million in trade. The European Parliament, citing health reasons, was instrumental in the EEC's decision to ban hormone-treated meat throughout the 12-nation trading bloc. It called on the United States "to join with the European Community in negotiations or arbitration in the context of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade." "International negotiations should take place on an active policy to combat the use of hormones and other chemical growth substances for the production of meat," the resolution stated.

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- 71 Building Trades
- 72 General Business
- 73 Practical English
- 04 Auto Mechanics
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- 06 Electronics
- 07 Secretary
- 08 Electron
- 09 Police Sciences
- 10 Art
- 11 Legal Secretary
- 12 Diesel Mechanics
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Rost-Witt era begins with Leistner

BIRMINGHAM (AP) — West Germany's Claudia Leistner won the women's title as the European figure skating championships ended Saturday.

Leistner became the first post-Katarina Witt champion after the East German won for the last six years. Leistner was the only non-Soviet winner of this year's championships and the first West German woman's champion in 35 years.

"I would have liked Katarina to have been here so I could have tried to beat her," Leistner said. Witt retired last year after dominating the sport since 1984.

In 1954 Gundi Bush took the women's crown. The last West German winner of the men's event was Norbert Schramm in 1982 and 1983.

Second, was Natalia Lebedeva of the Soviet Union while the bronze medal went to another West German, Patricia Neske who pulled up from sixth.

Leistner, a 23-year-old from Mannheim, led all three phases of the competition. In Saturday afternoon's free skating, she faltered on a triple loop jump but "two jumps later I did it correctly, and forgot about it."

She otherwise had an errorless routine with five triple jumps and received scores that included two 5.8's.

Soviets won the other three events as they took seven out of 12 medals, two less than last year.

Larisa Selezneva and Oleg Makarov won the pairs event in the absence of injured Ekaterina Gordeeva and Sergei Grinkov, the Olympic champions.

MELBOURNE (R) — American John McEnroe continued his single-minded climb back to the top of men's tennis by brushing past West Germany's Patrick Kuehnen into the last 16 at the Australian Open Sunday.

McEnroe, seeded seventh, won 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 in a disciplined performance that contained no hint of the tantrums which marred his second-round match against Australia's Brod Dyke.

"That's best I've felt I've concentrated in quite a while," said McEnroe after a third-round match sprinkled with touches of genius from the left-hander.

"If I can keep that level of concentration then I feel I'll be in great shape," McEnroe now meets 10th seed Aaron Krickstein who disposed of Nicolas Pietrangeli of Sweden 6-4, 7-5, 6-4.

Number two seed Ivan Lendl gunned down 17-year-old Swede Niklas Kulti in straight sets while fourth seed Stefan Edberg dished out similar treatment to American Johan Krick.

Australian Pat Cash, open finalist for the past two years and Edberg's next opponent, expended minimum effort to maximum effect in disposing of Britain's Jeremy Bates 7-6, 6-2, 6-3.

Cash hit trouble only once, handing Bates two set points in the tiebreak at 6-4.

Bates, ranked 179, blew his chance by serving a double fault. Cash pulled level at 6-6 and from then on made sure his opponent has never in with a prayer.

"Once I got my eye in I thought I played pretty well but the wind was swirling around all over the place," Cash said.

World number one Steffi Graf reached the quarter-finals of the women's draw after a tougher-than-expected tussle with Australia's Nicole Provis while Gabriela Sabatini stumbled before beating Raffaella Reggi of Italy 6-0, 4-6, 6-1.

Reggi, smiling broadly despite her predicament, came back bravely from her first set whitewash to break the third seed's serve in the opening game of the second.

Sabatini regained control early in the deciding thanks to her whip-cracking forehand which Reggi found increasingly difficult to counter.

Provis, the number 16 seed, broke Graf's serve twice in the first set which she eventually lost 6-4, before being blown away 6-0 in the second as the West German opened up the throttle.

Graf, who had lost only four games before today's match, now meets compatriot Claudia Kohde-Kilsch.

"I played really well in the first but I don't know what happened in the second. I supposed my concentration went a bit," Provis said.

"I should never have let her get to four-all, Graf said later. "I was not working enough against the wind. I was hitting too short and

the first three tricks and then conceded the rest when the jack-ten of diamonds dropped deuce and my nine provided the entry to the high spade. While I was lucky this time that my partner held a really good hand, I remain,

Dear UV: We will admit that the hand you submit, at first glance, has little, if any, merit. If that is indeed typical of what you hold, we would suggest that you switch to baccarat or some other pastime that does not involve pastboards.

We do not blame partner for opening three no trump with his hand. Not pretty perhaps, but can you think of a better bid? And we do not think that you realize just how good your hand was. For instance, switch your eight of spades with West's seven, or your nine of diamonds with any of West's spot cards, and the limit of the hand is exactly eight tricks. Partner's 26 high-card points will have gone down the drain. In a way, yours was the most important hand in the partnership!

Sincerely, Goren/Sharif

GOREN BRIDGE

BY CHARLES GOREN AND OMAR SHARIF
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LOVE THOSE SPOTS

Both vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 8 6 4 3
♥ 7 5 2
♦ 9 3 2
♣ 6 4 2

EAST
♠ A 9
♥ J 10 9 8 4
♦ J 10
♣ Q J 10 8

WEST
♠ K Q 7 5 2
♥ 6 5
♦ 7 5 4
♣ 5 3

SOUTH
♠ J 10
♥ A K Q
♦ A K Q 8
♣ A K 9 7

The bidding:
South West North East
3 NT Pass Pass Pass
Opening lead: Five of ♠

Gentlemen: I know you are both busy men, but I feel I have to let off steam. I am writing this letter to introduce you to the world's worst cardholder—me!

Naturally, I was sitting North on this hand. Actually, it was one of my better hands—it did contain a nine! My partner opened three no trump, which doesn't sit well with me because he had one suit untrumped.

The opponents led a spade, took

the first three tricks and then conceded the rest when the jack-ten of diamonds dropped deuce and my nine provided the entry to the high spade. While I was lucky this time that my partner held a really good hand, I remain,

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Warrior in action: bloodied but unbeaten, former world no. 1 John McEnroe continued his climb back to the top of the ratings Sunday with a firm win over Patrick Kuehnen

McEnroe continues steady comeback

Sabatini stumbled before beating Raffaella Reggi of Italy 6-0, 4-6, 6-1.

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Star striker weightlifts to hold his own

LONDON (R) — An intensive spell of weight training has transformed Paul Merson from a skinny youngster into one of English soccer's most exciting strikers.

A few months ago the slightly built Merson despaired of ever making the grade with top London club Arsenal.

"I was too light," he said. "People were knocking me off the ball all the time. I seemed to be forever being substituted because I had run out of steam."

But under the watchful eye of coach Theo Foley, Merson has become a new man. Weight training has filled him out by seven kilos and now he can more than hold his own on the pitch.

His 10th goal in 13 matches, which salvaged a 1-1 draw for the first division leaders Sheffield Wednesday Saturday, has more than justified manager George Graham's decision to give Merson a chance to win his spurs rather than splash out on a big-name striker.

Foley said that Merson's emergence as a quality player this season had given the Gunners a new dimension. "There is always pressure playing for Arsenal and you must be able to take it. Paul has done that magnificently," Foley added.

But 20-year-old Merson is taking nothing for granted despite the recent flood of goals and collecting the league's young player of the month award last week.

"If I stop scoring now, I'll still be a flop," he said. "Twelve goals isn't good enough for the season. If I don't carry on scoring the boss will go out and buy someone."

"But I'm not setting myself any sort of target. Three months ago I only had two goals and would have been happy with 10 for the season."

Merson's scoring burst could not have been better timed with striking partner Alan Smith going through a lean spell. Smith has collected 18 goals this season but only three have come in his last 14 appearances.

Merson was quick to praise Smith for helping him to establish himself in the first team. "Alan's been brilliant with me. He'd always help me when I wasn't scoring," he said.

"And he has taught me a lot. His holding up of the ball is tremendous. When he holds it up, there's not many centre halves who can take it off him."

Smith was the villain of the piece against Wednesday, squandering three chances before Iure Varadi gave the visitors the lead from their first real attack after an hour.

Merson saved the day for Arsenal with a superb volley, described as "tremendous" by manager Graham, a quarter of an hour from the end.

The manager was not so pleased with his goalkeeper John Lukic for allowing Varadi to beat him to Ian Cranston's long through ball.

"The goal was a bad mistake," said Graham. "I think John froze. He came out and stopped, but he should have come all the way."

NBA Roundup

Jordan scores season high

Suns 116, Bulls 107

CHICAGO (AP) — Michael Jordan scored a seasonal record of 53 points but Phoenix overcame a 19-point first quarter deficit.

Jordan scored 50 or more points for the fourth time this season and the 16th time in his career. Elgin Baylor had 17, 50-point games, second to wilt Chamberlain's 118.

Jordan also had 14 rebounds and eight assists.

Phoenix, 8-11 on the road this season after going 6-35 last year, snapped Chicago's six-game winning streak, its longest since December 1983.

Tom Chambers scored 29 points for the Suns, who trailed 69-57 at halftime and outscored Chicago 32-18 in the third quarter. Eddie Johnson scored nine of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and Kevin Johnson had 18 points, 15 assists and 10 rebounds.

Bucks 116, Nuggets 107

DENVER (AP) — Ricky Pierce scored 21 points and Milwaukee outscored Denver 41-21 in the third quarter.

Michael Adams of the Nuggets made eight 3-pointers to tie the NBA record, held by Rick Barry of Houston and John Roche of Denver. Adams, who extended his streak to 78 consecutive games with at least one 3-pointer, finished with 28 points.

Alex English scored 33 points for the Nuggets, who led 63-48 at halftime. Milwaukee then outscored Denver 41-21 in the third quarter.

Supersonics 121, Knicks 119

SEATTLE (AP) — Nate McMillan and Dale Ellis made 3-pointers in the final 90 seconds as Seattle won its consecutive home game. New York, which led 70-56 at halftime, has lost the first three games on its seven-game road trip.

McMillan snapped a 113-113 tie on his 3-pointer with 1:26 remaining. Trent Tucker made a free throw with 1:06 left to pull New York within two. But Ellis, who finished with 18 points, gave Seattle a 119-114 lead on a 3-pointer with 16 seconds left.

Tucker made a layup with eight seconds remaining to pull New

York to within three points. Derrick McKey made two free throws with five seconds to go, increasing the lead back to five.

Johnny Newman made a 3-pointer at the buzzer for the Knicks.

Xavier McDaniel scored a season-high 36 points for the SuperSonics.

Warriors 136, Kings 111

SACRAMENTO (AP) — Mitch Richmond scored 25 points as Golden State won its eighth straight game, its longest winning streak in 14 years.

Rod Higgins added 22 points on 10-for-11 shooting. Chris Mullin scored 21 points and had 12 assists.

Vinny Del Negro and Rodney McRay scored 17 points each for the Kings. Kenny Smith scored 16 with seven assists.

Golden State made 21 of 29 shots in the third quarter and went ahead 104-74. Richmond scored 13 points in the period, including three 3-pointers.

Otis Smith's layup with 10:35 remaining gave the Warriors their biggest lead, 108-77.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Iran sports chief to debate failure

NICOSIA (R) — Angry football fans are to debate the national team's poor performance with Iran's sports chief after mobbing his car at a game against Japan, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported Saturday. It said physical education organization head Ahmad Dargahi offered to discuss fans' complaints after Japan beat an Iranian under-23 side 1-0 Thursday. Rowdy fans chanted protests against team coach Parviz Dehdari and surrounded Dargahi's car after the match, IRNA, monitored in Nicosia, quoted Akbar newspaper as saying. Dargahi got out of his car and said he would meet the fans at the stadium in Tehran following a string of international matches that Iran is to host soon, the paper said.

Slaney sets record

PORTLAND, Oregon (AP) — Mary Slaney set a U.S. indoor record in the women's 1,000 metres Saturday night at the U.S. West-Koin indoor track and field meet. Cheered on by the crowd in her adopted home state, the 30-year-old runner was clocked in 2 minutes, 37.60 seconds, breaking the old mark of 2:37.9 set by Joetta Clark in 1986.

Libya apologises for cancellation

ROME (AP) — The Libyan Soccer Federation has apologised to FIFA, the sport's international governing body, for the cancelling the Libya-Algeria World Cup elimination match—the official Libyan News Agency JANA said Saturday. Libya said it cancelled the game because of what it called the danger of an American attack against an alleged chemical weapons plant 90 kilometres outside of Tripoli. JANA said Saturday that Libya will notify FIFA about when it is ready to resume holding international competitions.

Monte Carlo claims first victim

MONTE CARLO (R) — Denmark's Jens Nielsen was the first victim of the 57th Monte Carlo rally when it got underway from five European cities Saturday. Nielsen was forced to abandon the race when his car crashed soon after leaving Lausanne, Switzerland. Some 172 cars left from Bad Homburg, West Germany, Monte Carlo, Barcelona, Spain, Lausanne and Sestriere in Italy for a 1,130-km drive to the central French city of Saint-Etienne, where the first timed stage is held Sunday. Six world rally champions are taking part in this year's race which has been given added lustre because it does not clash with the Paris-Dakar race. Top drivers have been tempted to the desert race in the past because of high prize money.

Girardelli sets record

WENGEN, Switzerland (AP) — Marc Girardelli nearly outclassed the rest of the World Cup elite Saturday in winning his third straight downhill in new record time on the icy Lauberhorn course, the circuit's longest.

The Austrian-born ace, bidding for his third World Cup title in a ten-year career, thrilled some 20,000 fans when he finished the 4.185-metre race in 2 minutes 25.76 seconds under a bright sky. His average speed down the curving, bumpy course dropping 1,028 metres was a spectacular 103.4 kilometres per hour.

Switzerland's Pirmin Zurbriggen, the defending World Cup champion, 1.92 second behind, in second place, his best result ever on the Lauberhorn. The time span was computed to be equivalent to more than 54 metres.

Girardelli posted best times at all three intermediate points to clip .78 from the previous best mark he had set Friday. His winning margin was wider than the time separating the next ten finishers, showing his superb form in the race in which almost all other entries were slower than in Friday's first downhill.

In the last seven events, Girardelli has collected 157 points out of a possible 175, showing his new domination of the event. His total now stands at 269, already more than what made him win his first title in 1985 when he was still specialising on the slalom events. Zurbriggen, who dethroned him in 1987 to win the first of this two titles, has piled up 211. "If mark keeps keeping this way, I will have no chance to keep the crystal globe," he said admiringly of Girardelli.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"Stanley is very sensitive to caffeine — coffee commercials give him insomnia!"

JUMBLE.

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles. One letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

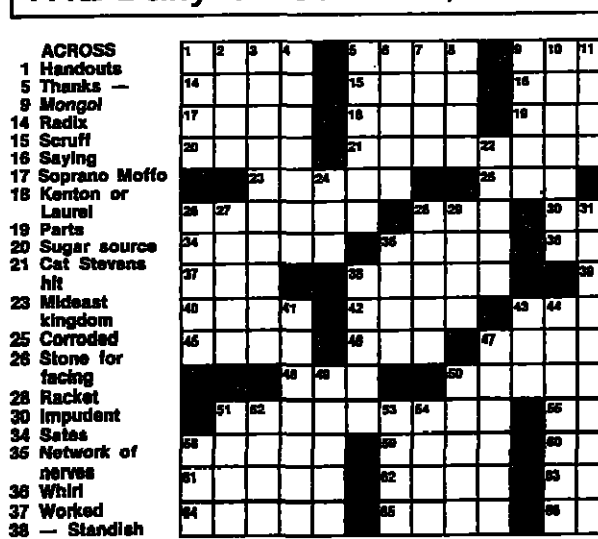


Print answer here: THE " " (Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: ODIUM WHOOP AGENCY CAMPER
Answer: What the first day of the week can be — "MOAN" DAY

THE Daily Crossword

by Judson G. Trent



- ACROSS
- Handouts
 - Thanks —
 - Mongol
 - Radix
 - Scruff
 - Saying
 - Soprano Muffo
 - Kenton or Laurel
 - Parts
 - Source
 - Carl Stevens
 - Midwest
 - Kingdom
 - Corroded
 - Stone for facing
 - Racket
 - Impudent
 - Salas
 - Network of nerves
 - Whirl
 - Bed
 - To a rag and —
 - Bean type
 - King: Sp.
 - Seethed
 - Molten flux
 - Master
 - Rod Stewart
 - Food
 - thickener
 - Journal
 - The —
 - Chord
 - Kind of roof
 - Liquor
 - flavoring
 - The two
 - Where Perry won
 - Lawman Earp
 - Goldello
 - Coaster
 - DOWN
 - Splitted steed
 - Porfom
 - Clyde
 - McPhatter hit
 - Grand
 - Rejoin
 - Old language
 - Gen
 - Care for
 - Gypsy card
 - Sultors
 - Larky
 - Let element
 - Legal point
 - Aboties
 - Grad. degrees
 - Measure
 - Of Tito's people: prof.
 - Put off
 - Billly Joel hit
 - Keaton or Cileto
 - Over
 - Emulate
 - Pincay
 - Cuban patriot
 - Most vast
 - glance
 - Scolds
 - Smolder
 - Heron kin
 - Endure
 - Legion
 - Semoan port
 - Hamburg's river
 - Othello
 - "And leads you to believe —" (Blafe)
 - Woodwind
 - Bear foot

Peanuts



Mutt'n' Jeff



Andy Capp

Solidarity conciliatory to Warsaw

GDANSK, Poland (AP) — The Solidarity Union Sunday welcomed the government's offer of talks on legalising the trade federation after a seven-year ban, and said negotiations should begin "as soon as possible."

In a statement released at the end of a meeting of the union's National Executive Commission, Solidarity said it was willing to respect Polish law and its own original 1980 statute.

As its main conditions the government had asked Solidarity to observe state laws, and Solidarity's national spokesman, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, said Solidarity and government cooperation to solve the nation's economic and social problems appeared to be "the only solution."

"As long as Solidarity is committed to a non-violent strategy, to compromise, obviously there is no question of overthrowing the government and replacing it with another government," he told reporters. "So we must get together and try to solve our problems."

Solidarity said in the statement that the government had met its conditions for beginning talks on

legalising the union once again, and for discussions of Polish problems.

"We state that the possibility of negotiations concerning Solidarity and the matters of the country has been created," the Executive Commission said, adding that its statement was adopted unanimously, with one abstention.

"It is necessary to start negotiations as soon as possible. They should have a realistic and concrete character, and public opinion should be informed about it fully," the union statement said. "On our side we express the will to act according to the law and according to the statute of our union in the spirit of the superior interests of Poland."

The statement added that "all sides" should put "the good of the country above all individual interests."

The union also said there

should be an agreement between communist authorities and the opposition on a reform programme to combat Poland's "dramatic economic" and ecological problems.

After the commission meeting ended, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa briefly addressed 5,000 people at a Sunday mass at Saint Brygida's Church.

He then met with reporters, his eyes sparkling, a Solidarity pin in his lapel and his tie held by a clip given him by U.S. President George Bush while visiting as vice president last year.

Asked if Solidarity, the East Bloc's first independent trade movement, had recorded a great victory, Walesa said: "I am a practical man and practice will show how far Poles can go in agreement."

Solidarity's statement opens the way for formal talks to begin between the opposition and Polish authorities at a so-called "Round-table" meeting, first proposed by the government during a wave of strikes in August.

Walesa had demanded that Poland's communist officials make a

political decision to legalise the union again before he would join the talks.

Both sides have said they are ready to meet, and it appeared that negotiations could begin quickly, perhaps within the next few weeks.

Walesa told reporters no date had been set, "but working contacts are maintained, and we are preparing for serious talks."

The negotiations would be the first formal talks between Solidarity as an organisation and state authorities since Poland banned the union in December 1981, when the government imposed martial law in a crackdown on dissent and labour unrest.

Walesa said there was "no need" for a face-to-face meeting between himself and Polish leader General Wojciech Jaruzelski, because "there are no problems that require such a meeting."

He told reporters that Solidarity could be ready within two months to hold its first nationwide congress since 1981.

After the mass, about 1,000 people marched from the church chanting, "Solidarity, Solidarity."

Down with the commune. Legalise Solidarity." Police prevented the march from proceeding more than a few blocks and it disbanded peacefully.

Deliberation

Walesa Saturday called the meeting of the union's National Executive Commission in Gdansk to formulate a response to the Communist Party's announcement Thursday of a position paper that would legalise Solidarity under certain conditions.

Communist authorities offered to legalise Solidarity under terms to be negotiated if the union respects the law and agrees to help in reforming the economy.

The party statement, agreed on at a stormy Central Committee meeting, marked a dramatic reversal for the party and for Jaruzelski, who during martial law interned thousands of people in order to crush Solidarity.

Addressing sceptical workers at the Lenin shipyard during a meeting Friday, Walesa said he also had doubts about the authorities' intentions.

Missile crisis letters remain under wraps

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. State Department is refusing to unseal a 26-year-old correspondence between President John F. Kennedy and Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev concerning the Cuban missile crisis, despite requests from scholars who say officials in Moscow are "thrilled" by the idea.

The 11 classified letters exchanged in 1962 following the Cuban confrontation remain "extremely sensitive... from the national security point of view," said Pratt Byrd of the department's Freedom of Information Office.

Scholars had hoped for the release of the letters in time for a conference in Moscow next weekend featuring for the first time missile crisis participants from the United States, Cuba and the Soviet Union.

"There'll never be a group able to discuss these letters like this group ever again," scholar James

G. Blight said in a telephone interview last week.

"Some of the co-authors of these letters will be in the room," said Blight, assistant director of the Centre for Science and International Affairs at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

He said scholars are anxious to learn "what was said so often and so deeply felt, because this was supposed to be regarded by both men as absolutely private."

The missile crisis flared in October 1962 when an American U-2 spy plane spotted construction of Soviet medium-range ballistic missile sites in Cuba. Kennedy responded with a naval blockade.

Many believe the confrontation brought the superpowers to the brink of war. It ended when Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles in exchange for U.S. guarantees that Cuba would not be invaded.

Blight, who recently published



Nikita Khrushchev



John F. Kennedy

a book on the missile crisis and helped set up the Moscow conference, said Soviet leaders were enthusiastic about the idea of releasing the letters.

"The Soviets were thrilled by this idea," Blight said. Mikhail Gorbachev "absolutely would have gone along with it," he said. "There's no doubt in my mind."

Aleksander Alekseev, Soviet

ambassador to Cuba at the time of the crisis, urged Kremlin leaders to allow release of the letters. Other "people very close to Gorbachev and the Central Committee" also embraced the idea, Alekseev said.

But Blight said the Soviets would not release the correspondence without U.S. State Department approval.

Public pays respect to Hirohito

TOKYO (AP) — More than 160,000 Japanese paid their respects before a portrait of the late Emperor Hirohito Sunday as the Imperial Palace gates were opened to the public for the first time since the monarch died two weeks ago.

Palace officials said 164,300 people had visited by Sunday evening on the first of three days when the palace grounds — but not the buildings — will be open to the public. They attributed the large turnout in part to sunny weather.

A cold morning wind did not stop more than 5,400 people from gathering at Nijubashi, the palace's main entrance, by 9 a.m. (0000 GMT), when a team of police officers pulled open the tall, wooden gate.

Uniformed police formed a row at the front of the orderly crowd as it marched slowly toward the east garden square, where a gold-framed photograph of Hirohito could be seen behind the bullet-proof glass of a palace balcony.

Displays of chrysanthemums, symbols of Japan's monarchy, stood on either side of the black-and-white photograph, taken when the emperor was 80 years old. Hirohito died of cancer Jan. 7 at age 87.

Government leaders and representatives of various private groups already have paid their respects to Hirohito, whose state funeral is scheduled Feb. 24.

Foreign diplomats Wednesday visited the palace's Matsuo Ma Ma, or Pine Room, where Hirohito's body lies in state. The public has not been allowed inside palace buildings.

Security around the palace was tight Sunday, with traffic sealed off and at least 600 officers patrolling the grounds. Police watched from nearby rooftops as visitors stood in a carefully roped-off line that wound through gravel plazas outside the moated palace.

Police say at least six ultra-leftist groups, including the radical Chukaku-Ha, or Middle Core Faction, have threatened to disrupt observances for the late emperor. No incidents were reported Sunday.

Though conservatively dressed men and women made up most of the morning crowd, extreme rightists wearing black suits and ties were a visible presence at the palace.

One rightist group formed two rows in military style before bowing to the portrait, as officials tried to shoo news photographers away.



After leaving their limousine during the inaugural parade, President George Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush walk down Pennsylvania Avenue Friday waving to the cheering crowd.

Bush stops partying, gets down to work

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush officially ended his inaugural celebrations Sunday, a day after promising Congress a bipartisan foreign policy and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev a quick reply to his peace letter.

Bush also said Saturday on his first day in the White House presidential Oval Office that he is prepared to respond in kind to any acts of good will by those holding Americans hostage, but will make no concessions "to free those precious lives."

"I want to make clear to them that good will begets good will," he said. In a freewheeling exchange with reporters, the new president also said he intends to meet with congressional leaders Tuesday to discuss the government's spending deficit and foreign policy, and has asked to address a joint session of Congress Feb. 9. Bush hinted that would be a more specific call to action than what he termed a "thematic" inaugural address Friday.

Chief of Staff John Sununu said Bush will meet with a bipartisan group of congressional leaders Tuesday on the budget deficit and on foreign affairs.

Sununu said he expected Bush to make a statement to coincide with Monday's anti-abortion demonstration in Washington to mark the anniversary of the 1973 Roe versus Wade supreme court decision legalising abortion in the United States. Bush opposes abortion in most cases.

After a night Friday of celebration at 13 inaugural balls, Bush and his wife Barbara were up early to open the doors of the White House to 4,500 ordinary Americans, many of whom had stood in line for hours in bitter cold for a special tour and a chance to stroll the south lawn.

After personally escorting 15 tourists, picked at random, through his new home, Bush took his place at the Oval Office desk occupied by Ronald Reagan for the last eight years. There, he found a congratulatory note from Reagan, inscribed on joke-shop stationery which bore the printed heading: "Don't let the turkeys get you down."

Bush acknowledged he couldn't find his way around the White House his first night, after he and the first lady returned from the long round of balls. "I got lost trying to find a couple of kids' rooms," he chuckled.

Bush's mother, five children, their spouses and 10 grandchildren shared the first night in the mansion.

Bush met Saturday with Central Intelligence Agency Director William Webster and National Security adviser Brent Scowcroft, and took a moment to stroll on the White House grounds and tennis court with his children and grandchildren. More events were planned Saturday night, and Bush's official inaugural calendar ended Sunday with a national prayer service at the Washington cathedral.

COLUMN

Zimbabwe solves fences mystery

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe police have finally solved the mystery of the vanishing fences. For months, law enforcement officers had received complaints that newly erected wire security fences had been stolen from houses and schools in the Mabvuku and Tafara suburbs of Harare. Then a police patrol spotted two men with pliers unraveling a wire fence from a school in the area around midnight. The police fired shots in the air and arrested the thieves. It turned out that both were contractors who erected the fences and returned later to steal them, police said.

Vibrating seats for Chinese drivers

PEKING (R) — China plans to equip new cars and trucks with special vibrating seats to prevent accidents by massaging drivers' bottoms according to ancient acupuncture principles, an official newspaper said Sunday. The China Daily said the electrically-powered seat cushions stimulated circulation and relaxed muscles by pummeling three acupuncture points on the body, reducing driver fatigue. Tests showed the seats could reduce accidents by up to 10 per cent and would save China \$27 million a year in road crash losses if used nationwide, it quoted an automobile industry official as saying. Vehicle manufacturers will begin fitting the seats, produced by the Jiangling Special Cushion Factory in Jiangsu province, to long-distance buses and trucks and some light cars this year. Eventually all Chinese automobiles will use them, it said.

Pork rinds not too good for Bush

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pork rinds? They're loaded with cholesterol, salt and fat. But they crunch pleasingly and explode on the palate with delight before dissolving into a light, bacon-flavoured residue. And President George Bush loves them. He was introduced to the crispy tan strips during his days as an oilman in west Texas. After a tough day in the oil fields, pork rinds, washed down in a cold beer, seems like a food of kings — or presidents. So when Bush left Texas for the political wars of Washington, he carried with him a continuing yen for them. But a diet laced with pork rinds, say nutrition experts, is bad news for a guy with a job like George Bush's. "This is an appropriate snack for somebody who is doing a lot of manual labour — an agricultural worker, a guy working on the chain gang, or building railroads," said Dr. Wayne Callaway, an associate clinical professor of nutrition at George Washington University.

Cafe owner buys 'Casablanca' piano

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese coffee shop owner made a winning 19 million yen (\$152,000) bid for the piano played in the 1943 Humphrey Bogart movie "Casablanca," his son said Friday. Shinji Ichimura, 48, placed his bid for last month's New York auction by Sotheby's through a department store in the western Japanese city Osaka. The name of his coffee shop? Casablanca, of course.

Newton accepts libel award

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Entertainer Wayne Newton said Thursday he will accept a \$6 million libel award in his long-running lawsuit against the NBC television network, saying he feels vindicated from a nearly nine-year-old report that linked him to the mafia. "This was not a matter of money," Newton told a news conference. "This was a matter of vindication of my name." Newton's attorney, Morton Galane, said the interest accrued on the reduced \$5.3 million award now equals six million.

Rubiks not to be computerised

NEW DELHI, India (AP) — The inventor of Rubik's puzzles said Friday he's against the idea of letting his world-famed games become computerised. "I want people to feel our puzzles in their hands and not solve them on a computer screen," Erno Rubik, the Hungarian inventor whose games took the world by storm, said in an interview. "I have no intention of creating computer games or letting our puzzles be computerised," the 44-year-old architectural engineer said.

Protest ignites violence in S. Korea

SEOUL (R) — Riot police clashed with thousands of anti-government and anti-American demonstrators Sunday in a protest called by a day-old alliance of 20 dissident groups.

More than 10,000 workers, students, labour activists and dissidents massed peacefully in a city street and then headed towards the headquarters of President Roh Tae-woo's ruling democratic Justice Party several blocks away.

Their way was blocked by about 1,000 riot police in black helmets and green uniforms and several hundred protesters responded with a barrage of

petrol bombs and rocks, only to be driven back by volley after volley of tear gas.

Police arrested scores of protesters, kicking and punching many of them, during the hit-and-run battle which raged over three hours. There were no reports of serious injuries.

Sunday's protest was called by the Coalition for a National Democratic Movement, an umbrella organisation of about 20 dissident groups formed Saturday.

Some 3,000 activists massed on a Seoul University campus Saturday to launch the alliance that Seoul newspapers say may

develop into a hardline reformist political party.

Sunday's clashes left the streets looking like a battle ground, littered with rocks and shattered glass. Many shop windows were broken by the missiles hurled by the protesters. Tear gas was used by police for the first time this year.

The radicals shouted "Drive out Americans" and slogans accusing the government of colluding with business conglomerates to suppress labour activism and demanding the repeal of what they said were repressive laws.

Anti-Americanism has become a strong element in recent protests by radical students, who blame the United States for the division of the Korean Peninsula in 1945 and the installation of a series of repressive rulers in the south.

Among the new coalition's leaders are Kim Kun-Tae, winner of the Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award in 1987 and Lee Bu-Yong and Chang Ki-Pye, who were released from jail under a presidential amnesty last year following conviction for organising a 1986 street riot in the western city of Incheon.

Racial tension, Super Bowl grip Miami

MIAMI (R) — Miami was a city with a split personality Saturday as black residents mourned a second death linked to this week's racial unrest and visiting football fans flocked to lavish Super Bowl celebrations.

One day before the national football league championship game, police remained on alert for further disturbances after violence rocked the city's poorest black neighbourhoods.

The latest source of anguish for Miami's black community was the death of black activist Nick Ferguson, a 66-year-old asthmatic who apparently inhaled fatal amounts of smoke and teargas while trying to stop youths from

looting and burning stores Tuesday night.

Ferguson was found in his apartment Friday and the medical examiner's office ruled he died of a clogged bronchial tube. It was the second death to result from three nights of unrest in the city's Liberty City and Overtown sections.

A world away, at luxurious beachfront hotels and posh restaurants, Super Bowl revellers celebrated the coming game.

With up to 100,000 out-of-town football fans and 2,300 reporters in town for the game between the Cincinnati Bengals and the San Francisco 49ers, city officials were doing their best to put the

week's troubles behind them.

"What a beautiful night for Miami. We're all a little tired from this week," Mayor Xavier Suarez told a cheering crowd jammed into the city's Bayfront Park Friday night for a display of fireworks, salsa music and dancing.

The disturbances ruined plans to clean up the city's "Miami Vice" image during Super Bowl week, but city officials hoped to salvage something from their effort.

Police said they did not expect another round of racial violence like the one earlier this week when crowds of angry blacks clashed with police, looted

dozens of stores and burned 13 businesses.

But police were not letting down their guard. About 200 weary officers continued patrolling black neighbourhoods and some roadblocks remained in place. Police were beginning to saturate the area around Joe Robbie Stadium in preparation for Sunday's game.

Miami's wave of racial unrest was touched off Monday by the fatal shooting of an unarmed black motorcycleist, Clement Lloyd, 23, by a white policeman. Lloyd's passenger, Allen Blanchard, 23, was killed when the motorcycle crashed after the shooting.

Mongolians cling to their heritage as they modernise

By Jim Abrams
The Associated Press

ULAN BATOR, Mongolia — At the young people's cultural centre on a Sunday night, Mongolian girls with glitter on their cheeks and boys with narrow ties swivel to the driving beat of American singers Stevie Wonder and Whitney Houston.

Upstairs, a 12-piece band belts out Mongolian hits from the 1930s as a more middle-aged crowd, some dressed in the traditional robe-like "del" and high black riding boots, swirl around the room.

Mongolians, a people who once conquered a large chunk of the world and later were nearly swallowed up by it, today are involved in a delicate two-step of reaching out while holding on to the nation's cultural heritage.

Despite the isolation — the capital, Ulan Bator, is accessible in winter only by plane from Moscow or a 30-hour

train ride from Peking — signs of Western influence are seeping into this stolidly socialist nation of two million.

Foreign visitors must pay hotel and transportation bills with U.S. dollars, and are frequently stopped on the street by moneychangers offering twice the official dollar rate for the Mongolian currency, the tugrik.

At the "dollar store" in Ulan Bator, Mongolians with American or other Western money listen to a tape from a San Francisco radio station programme while buying British whiskeys, American toiletries and Japanese radios.

English, still rare in a country where studying Russian is mandatory starting in fourth grade, is now taught on prime-time national television with a series arranged through the British embassy.

The foreign influence, however, is predominantly Soviet. Thousands of Soviets — engineers, technical advisers,

traders and soldiers — live and work in Ulan Bator. The visage of Lenin peers from statues and billboards around the city, and a war memorial jutting into the skyline from a hilltop is dedicated to Soviet soldiers, not Mongolians.

Central Ulan Bator — which means "red hero" — is a collection of Soviet-financed, colunmed government buildings and utilitarian apartment complexes, most painted in unpleasant pink and yellow pastels. Mongolia must import most of its consumer goods, and 80 per cent of its trade is with the Soviet Union.

Mongolia adopted the Russian Cyrillic script in 1946. Study of the Mongolian script, suppressed for decades, was revived about four years ago, but classes only begin in the seventh grade.

Signs in the native script are rare, in contrast to Chinese inner Mongolia, where shops and offices frequently carry signs in Mongolian for the

Mongolian minority of three million.

About 6,000 Mongolian university and research students, the nation's best and brightest, study in the Soviet Union.

President and party leader Jambyn Batmonh, a 62-year-old former rector of the state university, is hoping to ease his remote, landlocked nation away from near total dependence on the Soviet Union and other Soviet bloc nations.

Relations with China, with which Mongolia shares a 4,700-kilometre border, show signs of improvement as Moscow and Peking patch up old differences. Mongolia, which sided with the Soviet Union when its two giant neighbours split in 1960, in 1987 removed one division of Soviet troops and has pledged a return home soon for a "considerable number" of the remaining 50,000 guarding Mongolia from a potential Chinese attack.

In early 1987, Mongolia and the United States established

diplomatic relations and are negotiating cultural and consular agreements.

"These are quite encouraging events," said Luvsandorj Davaagiv, head of the Foreign Ministry's Western Relations Department. He said Mongolia wants more economic, science and technology exchanges with the West.

Socialist countries now account for 97 per cent of Mongolia's annual \$1.6 billion in trade, 80 per cent with the Soviet Union. Those figures will be hard to change soon because Mongolia, which gets about \$1 billion in aid and two-thirds of its capital investment funds from the Soviet Union each year, is locked into shipping its ores, cashmere and meat to the socialist bloc.

Japanese companies seeking to buy Mongolian copper have had to go through the Soviet Union and East European countries, which get the hard currency Mongolia so badly needs.